Albert Bigelow Paine



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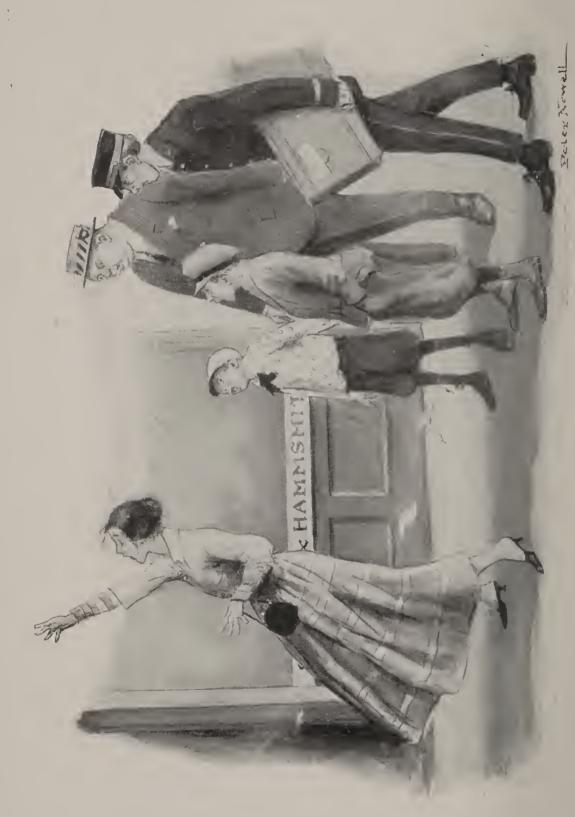


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The Car That Went Abroad
Single Reels

HARPER & BROTHERS
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"OH, MY HAT! MY NEW HAT! OH, CATCH IT FOR ME. SOMEBODY, PLE-E-ASE!"

By
Albert Bigelow Paine

Author of "The Car That Went Abroad," "Dwellers in Arcady" "The Tent Dwellers"

Illustrated



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THOMAS BUCKLIN WELLS WHO AS EDITOR OF HARPER'S MAGAZINE WAS COERCED INTO READING MOST OF THESE STORIES BEFORE THEY APPEARED IN PRINT



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MRS. TUMULTY'S HAT

AS Mrs. Tumulty rounded the cape at Seventythird Street and Broadway the gust caught her, and in the same instant she felt her hat and her head parting company. She grabbed wildly.

"Oh, my hat! My new hat! Oh, catch it for

me, somebody, ple-e-ase!"

Mrs. Tumulty's voice shrilled with agony, for it was, indeed, her new hat—a very large and expensive hat, which only the day before Mr. Tumulty, with very excellent taste in such matters, had really selected, as well as paid for, in celebration of his having won the Clayton Will case, which meant a pretty nice fee and new clients. Mrs. Tumulty swiftly remembered these things, now, as she ran, her gaze directed to the sky, which seemed to be her hat's general destination.

"Oh, oh!" wailed Mrs. Tumulty, "I'm going to lose my new hat that Roscoe bought me, and he'll blame me so! He says I never pin my hats on well, and I suppose I don't. Oh, just look at the

crazy thing, now!"

Mrs. Tumulty had a following, by this time, of two small boys, a fat man, and a red-haired delivery

clerk. The hat had suddenly abandoned its eccentric skyward flight, and made a straight dive downward, as if determined to perish under flying wheels. The bereft lady and her panting brigade pulled up suddenly to face the worst. Another instant, and that beautiful creation of flowers and feathers would be a maimed and blighted thing. The street was fairly full of motor cars, and the hat seemed aimed at the very center of the flying mass. But then Mrs. Tumulty gave a little cry, and her bodyguard a sort of general whoop. Something quite different had happened. At the very instant of its final plunge an open touring car, with two men in the front seat and nobody in the back, was timed by fate to be exactly under it. Instead of plunging to the ruin of the street, Mrs. Tumulty's hat seemed to right itself and settle very gently, even if suddenly, to the floor of the empty tonneau, and so went gliding away, the two gentlemen in the front seat quite unsuspicious of any trouble behind—that is to say, ahead.

"Six-eight-three-one-six! I got the number!" yelled one of the small boys; "six-eight-three-one-six! You'll get it, all right. All you've got to do is——"

But Mrs. Tumulty was running again, as if she had some notion that she could overhaul a car that was at least doubling the speed limit for motor vehicles. Her following fell away from her, but, by some inspiration, Mrs. Tumulty kept on.

A traffic policeman waved and called to the flying, bareheaded lady, but she did not heed him. Her eyes were glued to the gray open car, now swiftly dwindling into the perspective, two blocks away. And then, oh, joy! one of the men held out an arm, the gray car slackened and rounded into the curb. Mrs. Tumulty, who ten years before had been on the track team of her school, threw herself into top gear, and persons stepped aside to let her pass. The speeding lady did not notice them. She saw only that a man got out of the gray car and that an instant later, when she was still half a block away, the said car wheeled back into the traffic, turned a corner, and was gone.

The slender and rather anemic-looking gentleman who had descended from the gray car was about to pass through the entrance of a tall office building when a bareheaded, panting lady, with a very red face and flying hair, laid her hand on his arm. He took one look, and would have disappeared very suddenly if the excited person had

held him a bit less firmly.

"Oh," she said, "can't you have your car come back? My—my hat's in it! My hat that Roscoe gave me!"

The slender gentleman answered rather nerv-

ously, but with decision.

"Madam," he said, "there—there is s-some mistake. There was no hat—that is to say—no—no lady's hat in the car I was in. Try to—to calm yourself, madam."

"Oh, but my hat is in it. I saw it go in myself. I didn't have it pinned on well and the wind blew it off, and it fell right in the back of your car. I know it was yours, for I kept up and never lost sight of it. Oh, please telephone, or something."

The anemic gentleman reflected.

"You are a—a good runner, madam, to have kept up. Jack Nettleton has been fined twice for speeding. It is his car, not mine. He will be home presently, I judge, and I will telephone to see if he has—that is—what he may have in the back of his car, and if you will leave your address, madam, I am sure he will return your—that is—any strange apparel he may find there."

"But it is just a hat—a large, new hat, and can't you telephone right away? I'm so anxious! Or

give me the number and I'll do it."

The nervous gentleman hesitated.

"But—but I think Mr. Nettleton is hardly there yet, and you see, if Mrs. Nettleton should answer—well—I—you—explanations by telephone, you know—and Mrs. Nettleton is—is inclined to be a—a little, that is to say, quick in her conclusions, don't you see, and—and Jack is a good deal of a favorite—and a—lady's hat in the back of the car, and the—apparent—improbability of the——"

"Oh, yes, of course—I never thought of that. I wouldn't telephone myself for the world, but you could call up, and, if she answered, ask to have Mr. Nettleton call you when he comes,

couldn't you?"

"Y-yes, suppose so. I—I'll consider that. I will consider what seems best to do under the—I may say—rather peculiar circumstances, and I am sure—that is, I think, you will get your—eh—property, madam, in due time. I am a—a mining engineer, and accustomed to—to—hazardous undertakings. Now—the—the address, if you please, madam."

Mrs. Tumulty hastily dug from the depths of a small handbag a bit of pasteboard, thanked him, and, signaling a taxi, was presently on her

way home.

"If I can only get it again before Roscoe comes home," she groaned, as she settled back in the seat. "He would be so cross about it!"

But fate had arranged the matter in its own way. At that very moment Mr. Roscoe Tumulty was sitting in Mrs. Jack Nettleton's drawing-room, only waiting for Mr. Nettleton's return to discuss the terms of a joint will which Mr. Tumulty was to draw for the Nettletons prior to their departure on a West Indian and South American cruise.

"Mr. Nettleton and myself have decided to make a joint will," she was saying, "and to have you draw it. Of course, whatever belongs to one of us belongs to both. We are as one in everything, and always shall be; but if anything should happen, you know, and one never can tell on a voyage, these days, when everything is so very uncertain, and if anything should happen—to me, of

course—I should want Jack—Mr. Nettleton, I mean—to have everything, you know."

Mr. Tumulty nodded.

"A will is the proper protection," he said, "a good will—correctly drawn, I mean. Mrs. Tumulty and myself are, as you say, also one in everything—one in thought, effort, earthly possessions—for which reason we have long since made a joint will."

"Yes," epigrammed Mrs. Nettleton, walking to the window, "the more people belong the more their belongings belong. My husband should be here by this time. He had some business in Yonkers, but was to be back by eleven. He——"Mrs. Nettleton was here interrupted by a muffled ring from an adjoining room. "Excuse me," she said—"the telephone."

The one-sided conversation that came through the door to Mr. Tumulty did not, at the moment, seem important.

"Hello! Yes—yes, this is Mr. Nettleton's house. No—Mrs. Nettleton. Mr. Nettleton is not here. Yes, we expect him soon, but he will be quite busy when he comes; can you give me a message for him? Oh, I see; rather important and private. Well, I'm his wife, and can take any message. You prefer to have him call you. Oh, very well; and who is this? I see; his friend, Mr. Lawson—one-six-two-five Columbus. Thank you!"

To Mr. Tumulty it seemed that Mrs. Nettleton hung up the receiver with rather a jerky motion,

and she may have appeared just the least bit ruffled as she entered the room and walked to the window. But an instant later she turned, quite cheerfully.

"Mr. Nettleton is just coming; I am sorry we

have kept you waiting, Mr. Tumulty."

Declaring that the slight delay was of no consequence, Mr. Tumulty himself stepped to the window in time to see a gray open car draw up to the curb. A moment later the single occupant had jumped out and run diagonally across the street.

"Oh, dear!" fussed Mrs. Nettleton, "now he has gone over to the drug store after cigars. He always forgets them until he gets right to the door, and it takes forever to get waited on over there. I'll just step out and hurry him in."

She went, in spite of Mr. Tumulty's protest, and a moment later he saw her standing by the car. He politely left the window, then, and took a turn down the room. Ten seconds later Mrs. Nettleton burst in, alone. She held one hand behind her, and was visibly excited. The reader will recall that Mrs. Nettleton was inclined to be rather quick in her conclusions.

"Mr. Tumulty," she demanded, with forced

calm, "are you a divorce lawyer, too?"

"Why-madam-I-yes, madam; but why?"

"Well, I think it's very likely we'll change that joint will into divorce papers."

"But, my dear Mrs. Nettleton-I am at a loss.

I don't grasp the idea."

"You will, in a minute. I went out to meet my husband, as you know. While waiting, I stepped to the side of the car, thinking no evil, and looked in. What do you suppose I found there, Mr. Tumulty? What do you suppose?"

But Mr. Tumulty's legal mind was not given

to supposing. He shook his head, dazed.

"I found a hat, Mr. Tumulty—a woman's hat—in my husband's car—a costly hat—such as I have never felt able to wear myself; left in there by mistake, no doubt—and by whom? That's what you must find out, Mr. Tumulty, and draw the papers."

"But, my dear madam, he may be quite innocent. Perhaps it is a hat he has brought home to you, as a present. Only a day or two ago I bought, and, indeed, selected, a hat for my wife—quite an imposing hat, I may say; and this, also, may be a

present from-"

"From Jack Nettleton? Never! He doesn't know the first thing about hats, and wouldn't dare. Besides, he always has said he liked small hats—and look at that!"

Mrs. Nettleton snatched forth the hand she had been holding behind her, and so brought to view a splendid big creation of flowers and feathers, apparently not the least the worse for its adventure. Mr. Tumulty took one look, then himself seized the offending headgear.

"Well," he snorted, "I like that—I do, indeed! That? Why, that's my wife's hat. Her new one

—the one I mentioned—the very one I bought for her two days ago. I like that—I do, indeed!" And to show how much he liked it, Mr. Tumulty repeated his statement several times, with steadily increasing emphasis. The door opened iust then, and Mr. Jack Nettleton entered.

"Oh, I'm sorry to be late," he began, gayly, then paused. Something told him that all was not as it should be, and the figure of a gentleman whom he took to be the legal Mr. Tumulty, holding a large and sumptuous hat, was for some reason oppressive. He stood staring from one to the other, until his wife's voice brought him to himself with a sudden jerk.

"John Nettleton," she said, and there was a fearful menace in her tones, "Mr. Tumulty and I wish you to explain by what means you came by that hat."

Mr. Nettleton again turned from his wife to Mr. Tumulty and the hat, then back to his wife, and, getting no light, stared only at the hat, while his eyes took on a fixed, glazed expression, as if he were losing his mind.

"Yes, of course," proceeded Mrs. Nettleton, "you can't speak, confronted by your duplicity. Oh, to think——"

Mr. Nettleton found his voice.

"Say," he said, "what is this, anyhow—an April fool, or a bad dream? What do I know about that hat? I never saw it before in my life. What about it, anyhow?"

Mr. Tumulty "took the word," as the French say, replying calmly and judicially, as became one who might one day reasonably hope to occupy

the bench of justice.

"Mr. Nettleton," he said, "some few moments since, your wife, Mrs. Nettleton, upon going out to welcome you, chanced to look into the back of the car which stands outside, and has presumably been occupied by yourself during the forenoon. What was her astonishment to discover there, carefully placed on the floor of the tonneau, this rather expensive and, I may say, handsome hat. Furthermore, it is a hat not strange to me. It is, in fact, the identical millinery that two days ago I purchased as a gift to my wife. You will understand, therefore, Mr. Nettleton, why Mrs. Nettleton and myself are naturally disturbed, and consider that an explanation is in order."

Mr. Nettleton made no immediate reply, but reached out as if to take the hat, and then dropping into a chair, sat gazing at it in a fascinated way.

"Somebody's playing it on me," he said at last—"that's the size of it. But who is it, and what's it for? That's what I want to know."

Mrs. Nettleton said in frozen accents: "Possibly you might learn something by calling up your friend Mr. Lawson. He telephoned a little while ago and left a request that you call him as soon as you should arrive—declining to leave a message—said his business was important—and private."

Mr. Nettleton straightened up.

"Lawson? Sure! Brought him down from Yonkers. But it isn't a joke if it's Lawson. He couldn't play a joke on anybody. I'll call him, all right."

Mr. Nettleton hurried to the next room, and, a few moments later, had Mr. Lawson on the wire. The end of the conversation which the two listeners heard meant very little, being confined mainly to "Yes—yes—sure," and "Of course," but presently Mr. Nettleton hung up the receiver, and, with a great laugh, returned to the drawing-room.

"By gracious!" he declared, "that's the best yet. It's your wife's hat, all right, Mr. Tumulty, and it was blown from her head into the back of my car. She ran after us and saw Lawson get out, but couldn't catch me in time, and asked him to telephone. Say, but that's a good one!"

Mr. Tumulty's face showed signs of relaxing,

but Mrs. Nettleton remained chilly.

"That's a very likely story," she said. "If it's as innocent as all that, why did Lawson tell me that his business was important and private?"

"Why, because Lawson is an ass—as usual—that's why. He thought he'd stir up trouble by telling you, so he did just that by not telling you."

Mr. Tumulty said, without emotion: "There are circumstantial aspects of this case in your favor, Mr. Nettleton. My wife has a habit of not sufficiently securing her headgear, and this

corroborative testimoney from your witness, Lawson——"

But Mrs. Nettleton interrupted scornfully: "His witness Lawson! What does that amount to? We didn't hear a word of what he said, and don't you know that in affairs of this kind men stick together like glue?"

Mr. Nettleton said: "Look here, I'm game. The car is outside. We'll go down and get Lawson, first; then we'll drive to the home of Mr. Roscoe Tumulty and try this case out in our own court. Mr. Tumulty, as a lwayer, can get at the facts, I guess, with all the witnesses together."

If Mrs. Nettleton softened at all during the next three minutes she did not manifest the fact, and by that time she was seated with Mr. Tumulty behind her husband, who was violating the speed laws on the way to the office of Orville G. Lawson, Mining Engineer. Then, some nine minutes later, with Mr. Lawson added to the party, they were speeding toward Mr. Tumulty's apartment on Seventy-fifth Street.

Mrs. Tumulty, anxiously awaiting the ring that would announce a messenger-boy, was considerably startled at the sudden entrance of her husband, who was not due until 5 P.M.

"Why, Roscoe," she said, "what brought you home this time o' day?"

"Business," said Mr. Tumulty. "Business that makes it necessary that I should examine the new hat I bought you two days since."

Then Mrs. Tumulty gasped a little and, repeating "Why, Roscoe," twice over, began to cry.

"Oh," she said, "I know, of course, you—you'll say it was my f-fault, but I thought I did have it p-pinned on tight, and the w-wind was awful, and n-nearly blew my hair off, too, and—and——"

"Where did it blow to?" asked Mr. Tumulty, with something of his professional examination

air.

"Into an au-automobile, but I'm g-going to get

it again, for-for-"

"That's all right," said Mr. Tumulty, "I know the rest." He stepped to the door. "Come in," he said, "this witness will corroborate all the former testimony, and is unimpeachable. Verdict for the defendant."

THE TOY OF FATE

WAS resting on a park bench after a hard day, when a disconsolate-looking man, approaching the middle years, seated himself at the further end and sighed deeply. He seemed so melancholy that I opened a way to his confidence. After sighing again in a really extraordinary manner, he told me this story:

I am seeking a quiet place—quiet and inexpensive. I also wish to be remote from my customary haunts, even lonesome. What I want is seclusion—I could stand oblivion. Let me explain my case.

I am quite a youngish person—being still under thirty-five—and by fifteen years of patient industry and laudable ambition have risen to the position of buyer in the woodenware department of Wickers & Tubbs, general housefurnishings, with a partnership in prospect. Possibly that does not sound especially romantic, but it has been so, even from the first. I had not been a week in the business when I met romance in it, in the person of Lavinia Tubbs, daughter of our junior partner. Having once looked upon her, I said:

"My future is assured; I will attend strictly to business, and in due time wed Lavinia and enter the firm."



I MET ROMANCE IN THE PERSON OF LAVINIA TUBBS



THE TOY OF FATE

I did not regard this as a mad dream, not when I examined her closely. She was then about sixteen, and several inches taller than she should have been at that age. She was also underweight and freckled, and her nose, which was strangely long, was not true as to alignment. Her hair looked as if it had been left out in the weather; she had a droop in one eye and a thin, searching voice. Those things would have bothered some people, but they filled me with confidence. The competition was not likely to be brisk. A policy of watchful waiting was the thing.

"Beauty," I said, "is a snare. I know her true

value. I will be a partner in the firm."

Through all the fifteen years since then I have served for Lavinia. Step by step I have risen from the basement to "sales," from "sales" to a desk in the office. I have been not only industrious, but circumspect. Whenever Miss Tubbs appeared I have shown her delicate attention. Ezra Tubbs has invited me to his home and I have sat at his table. I have watched Lavinia fulfill the promise of her youth-seen her change from a bud to a blossom, from a blossom to a prune. I have been considerate, even complimentary. Quite often I have sent her flowers. I might have precipitated matters, any time during the past five years, I suppose, but I have never been as one blinded by love. All seemed going well enough. The thought of a speedy union with Lavinia, even for the sake of a partnership, was not compelling.

But then, last week, trouble began. The quiet idyl of fifteen years was marred—the fair prospect blurred. I learned with a real shock that Lemuel Platt of queensware "sales," a bald-headed old Methuselah of forty, had twice in the past two weeks been asked to dine in the Tubbs home circle and each time had taken Lavinia to the theater. Think of it! after my fifteen years' devotion! and Lemuel Platt only six months with the firm! One of the other boys told me about it. He said Platt was going to follow it right up, and that I'd better get a move on me.

I do not approve of slang, but I thought his advice about developing motion good. I am prompt, once aroused. I wrote a note immediately to Miss Tubbs and invited her to accompany me to the theater on the following evening. I asked her to telephone acceptance, which she did, quite promptly. The carrying quality of her voice is certainly remarkable. I held the receiver away from my ear, for safety.

I did not know the character of the play we were going to see, but I know that I should have selected another. It was a comedy and many persons in the audience thought it funny. Miss Tubbs did not. The main character in it was an old maid whose name by some fatality happened to be Lavinia, and, what was still worse, she looked for all the world like Lavinia Tubbs herself. After the first act Miss Tubbs sat rigid while I tried to think of something to improve matters. I decided to

THE TOY OF FATE

invite Lavinia to have supper, at a good place. I reflected that there is nothing like food and gayety to pacify the mind.

The play ended well enough. The spinster got rid of the man who was after her money and wed a humble but honest millionaire. Miss Tubbs, however, was still cool when we left the theater.

"I suppose of course you knew what the play

would be like," she said, icily.

"Not in the least," I said, "and I thought it abominable. But I do know what the supper is going to be like. We are going across to the Café Beaumonde and have something very nice in a chafing-dish."

I knew Miss Tubbs would find something deliciously daring in the chafing-dish idea. She was, in fact, mollified, and we were presently in an inconspicuous corner, looking at the bill of fare.

"Let us have something very dainty," I said.

"You know how to select such things."

That was the kind of remark to win her, but I wish she had not decided upon a Welsh rabbit and Bocko imitation beer. I suppose she thought it would look real frolicsome to be seen having a late rabbit and beer at the Beaumonde.

Miss Tubbs is never in better humor than when she thinks she is being frolicsome and sporty. That is why I encouraged the rabbit and the makebelieve beer. That is why I told her about the lively doings of Greenwich Village, where the fetterless few disport themselves amid weird lights

and decorations, and promised to conduct her to all those nice, interesting places some sweet day—evening, I mean—though I have never been there myself except incidentally in the daytime, when it all looked shockingly frowsy, and anything but interesting.

Miss Tubbs was quite restored by the time the refreshments came, and, after a taste of the rabbit and a sip of the exhilarating Bocko, became really merry. She rested her elbows on the table, and with her cheek resting archly on her lightly folded fingers, she looked across the foaming Bocko and asked me to tell her something more of the unusual and fascinating things of life. She had been reading something of the occult of late. Was I interested in the occult? Had I ever visited a medium or attended a seance?

Ah, then the demon of my destruction patted me on the back. I knew something really amusing in that line, I said. Once long ago I had attended a series of table-tippings, and the results had been most wonderful and convincing until, quite by accident, I had discovered that the medium was tipping the table with her knee.

"Let me show you how she worked it," I went on, and, crossing one knee over the other and making a fulcrum of the ball of my foot, I slowly and mysteriously, quite in the mediumistic manner, lifted the table an inch or so from the floor.

Miss Tubbs uttered a startled little, "Oh, my, how wonderful!" which encouraged me to still

THE TOY OF FATE

further manifestations. I was quite elated in the feeling that Lemuel Platt was not really in the

running with a person like myself.

"The table tips three times for 'yes,' twice for 'no,' once for 'I don't know,'" I said. "When very much pleased, it dances with excitement. Most of the spirit controls being Indian chiefs, they of course like to dance. I will now ask a few questions of Chief Big Wampum."

"Oh," said Lavinia Tubbs, "how lovely!"

I wished Miss Tubbs had a more subdued intonation and that other diners would resist looking in our direction. I modified my own tones to the lowest audible pitch. I said:

"Will the big chief please tell us if he is glad to

be here to-night?"

The spirit of Big Wampum declared in three quite positive lifts of the table that he was. Lavinia Tubbs smiled and blushed.

"Will the chief please tell us if he is glad Miss

Tubbs is here to-night?"

Three still more positive lifts of the table. Miss Tubbs became almost radiant. The shadow of Lemuel Platt had disappeared beyond the horizon. I quite forgot my surroundings.

"Will the chief please tell us if he thinks Miss Tubbs looks well in her lovely new evening gown?"

Three large lusty lifts, followed by the beginning of a war-dance. Only the beginning—just a few fancy steps, as it were—then, oh, curses! the side of the table next Miss Tubbs seemed to sink

away and most of the rabbit and practically all of the Bocko beer went plunging into her lap. She jumped up with a shriek. Her napkin must have slipped down, for her new gown was plastered with rabbit in the form of a yellow apron, besides being soaked with Bocko. A waiter came running. We attracted general attention. Lavinia's voice would insure that.

"Take me home! Take me home at once!" she commanded. "Oh, I believe he did it purposely"—arraying herself thus publicly against me—"and he knew all about that horrid play, too! Just look at my dress!" which everybody did, and some remarked that it was a shame, while Miss Tubbs burst into tears.

I handed the waiter a bill and did not wait for change. Tears certainly did not help Lavinia's type of beauty. "Take me home!" was the burden of her refrain, and I directed my efforts solely to that end.

There was a line of taxicabs in front of the Beaumonde, but all engaged. I followed down the line, looking anxiously. Miss Tubbs came with me, repeating that she wanted to go home at once and did not care how she got there. I seemed to detect less acrimony in her voice, now that we were no longer on exhibition, and took this as a hopeful sign.

"Surely you know it was an accident," I protested. "Not for all the world would I distress you so by intention."

THE TOY OF FATE

"Accident or no accident, I want to go home," wailed Lavinia Tubbs.

At the extreme end of the line there was an old one-horse coupé that ought to have been in the Metropolitan Museum collection. Words could not picture its dilapidation. Its driver was an equally musty relic, and stone-deaf. I had to climb upon the box and shout into his ear the number and street of Miss Tubbs's residence.

When we clambered inside, the place seemed unholy. I sensed that the cushions were tattered. Neither was it a comfortable vehicle. It was destitute of rubber tires and seemed without springs. We moved with a jerky jog, and when we crossed a car track we stood up a little, supporting ourselves on the frame of the front windows. When we turned into a cobbled street under the "L" we stood up still more. Occasionally Miss Tubbs moaned out something about what an evening it had been, and I could see that among other things she was now blaming me for the moldy old coupé. I spoke a few soothing words. Incidentally I was framing a general defense, and a declaration, already too long deferred. I meant to open my case as soon as we reached a smooth street, where we could sit down.

I did not do so, however. Just as we came to the smooth street there was a heavy bump, followed by a splitting sound and a sudden sinking sensation. The bottom of our ancient vehicle had disappeared, landing us on the ground. Not in

disorder, however; still clinging to the front window-frame, we were trotting along briskly inside the cab.

"Oh! oh!" shrieked Lavinia Tubbs. "We shall be killed. Oh, my new dress! Stop him! Stop him!"

But this was a vain order. I yelled, and pounded on the window. The deaf old effigy on the box gave no sign. His aged plug of a horse seemed to hear, for he quickened up until we had to increase our speed considerably. Miss Tubbs wailed that she would certainly be killed and charged me with the deepest perfidy. I have a recollection of repeating over and over something to the effect that I was quite innocent of intentional wrong, that our horse was too old to go any faster, that the running was pretty good, that we only had to keep going to be quite safe. I might have begun my general defense and declaration, I suppose, but it did not seem a good time for it. The conditions were not sufficiently tranquil.

It was about four short blocks, and a half of a long one, to Miss Tubbs's home, though the distance seemed somewhat longer. Lavinia held out well, I must say. Being tall and spare, she was suited to such exercise. When I first knew her she was winning track events at school. Arriving at the house, I did not wait for the driver to get down. I opened the door, stepped through, and helped Lavinia to escape. Then I closed the door, paid the fossil and waved him away. I would not

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have tried to explain to that deaf old thing, feeling as I was, for a good deal. Let the next man do it.

To Miss Tubbs, however, my failure to protest

was incriminating.

"You didn't say a word to him," she charged, hotly. "You had it all arranged—everything—the whole evening—all because I let Mr. Platt take me to the theater! You thought you would punish me, but it will be you who gets punishment. I will speak to my father!"

I have a mortal fear of Ezra Tubbs. It is a

legacy from my early days with the firm.

"Lavinia," I cried, "be calm. Do nothing until you hear from me. I will send you a love offering before I sleep. I will also write you fully what I cannot tell you in this late disturbed hour. Rest,

dear Lavinia, and await my message."

I assisted her up the steps and saw her disappear. There was a florist's shop not far away where I had often ordered dainty tributes for Miss Tubbs. It being late, there was only a sleepy, stupid boy in charge, but I left my order. It was for roses, an extravagant quantity, but it seemed to me that the case warranted extravagance. I wrote the directions carefully on a card, and laid down one of my own.

"First thing in the morning," I said, "without fail. Put them on my account—Mr. Budd knows me—and, of course, put in my card. Now get that all straight," and I gave the drowsy idiot a little shake to loosen up his caked intelligence.

That was a mistake, I suppose. It may have disturbed entirely his feeble mental processes.

I sought my room, and before I slept I laid my case fully and completely before Lavinia Tubbs. I told of my long years of devotion and how now in one evening a cruel fate by a series of fiendish events had undertaken to destroy me. I showed clearly how nothing on earth could ever induce me to give her a moment's pain, how, indeed, my single thought was for her happiness, and finally how one little word from her would make me the most fortunate and envied of men. It was a strong document. In the morning I would carefully revise it and let it follow the roses by an hour or so, when Miss Tubbs should have fallen into a pensive and even sentimental mood.

I did not complete this plan. I was still in the midst of a light breakfast and careful revision when a note arrived per messenger, from Miss Tubbs herself. I seized it, pulsing with hope. Lavinia, renewed by the morning and greeted by my roses, undoubtedly had sent her tender forgiveness. I tore off the wrapper. The communication was quite brief. There was no beginning. It said:

You are probably reveling in the thought of your fiendish revenge. But your last step this morning, your "love offering," is not to be tamely endured, even by one so amiable and forgiving as I. Let me look upon your face no more. All relations between us are ended. It may possibly interest you to know, however, that I am by this same messenger accepting a proposal of

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marriage, found awaiting me last night, from Mr. Lemuel Platt.

LAVINIA TUBBS.

You will admit that this was staggering. I sat down, trying to grasp it. "Your last step this morning"—what did she mean by that? My last step had been forty dollars' worth of roses. "Your love offering"—the roses, of course! Ah!—I reached weakly for the telephone, and in a moment more I knew. A tide of apology from the floral Mr. Budd made all clear; that torpid flower-boy had misunderstood completely.

He had sent them up C. O. D.

MURPHY'S KITCHEN

THE rest of us always wondered how Weldon could afford to dine at the Walderbilt two or three times a week, frequently with a friend. Furthermore, he did not pay cash, but merely signed his initials to the dinner check, which indicated that his credit was not only good at the office, but something of an institution, so to speak.

It is true Weldon was a capable space writer on the Mercury and made very good money, but others of us who did nearly as well were quite far from being institutions at the Walderbilt. We wanted to know how he could do it, and sometimes asked him. His answers were not valuable, being rarely twice alike. It was rumored that Weldon had private means, which I doubted, for the reason that his living-quarters—his one room and bath—did not warrant the conclusion. It was decent enough, but far from luxurious. Many of us had quite as good.

I was thrown a good deal with Weldon and knew him rather better than the others did. More than once we had worked up a news story together, and I made up my mind that sooner or later I would extract from him the secret of his desirable hotel connection. The opportunity came



"POETRY," I SAID. HE REACHED FOR SOMETHING—SOMETHING HEAVY, I JUDGE



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when I stumbled upon the big Building-Permit scandal and let Weldon in on it. Our exposé grew into a series, with unlimited space for a picturesque word artist like Weldon. He was duly grateful, and we dined at the Walderbilt almost as a habit. One night I said to him:

"Look here, Weldon, you owe me something." He was a bit surprised, but game.

"How much?" he said.

"It's not a question of much, it's how do you do it—this, I mean."

Weldon reflected.

"It's coming to you," he agreed, presently.

"Straight?"

"Yep-straight-I've never told it before."

The coffee and cigars came. Weldon put his elbows on the table and leaned forward a little, so that he could talk at close range. Here is what he told me. I think it as true as most history. He said:

"I came down here from Sullivan County, fifteen years ago, to write poetry. I had been writing it at home and sending it down, but my consignments did not seem to stick. I got one piece into the *Pink Book*, but they cut out all but the first and last verses and made a typographical error that ruined the last line. So I came down. I went around to the magazines and left my poems with the girl in the front office. I guess she didn't like them, for she always handed them back to me when I came around again and

didn't suggest that I leave any more. Then I

tried the newspapers.

"I hardly ever got beyond the front office, there, either. I ran out of money pretty soon and owed for my room rent. It was getting cold, too, being toward the end of the year. It wasn't long till I was eating one meal a day and buying it at the places where you get the most and toughest for the money—the kind that stays with you. Mike's place on the Bowery was my favorite. Finally I did get to see an editor—the city editor of the Bulletin. He was a thick-set man and had a sudden way with him. 'What's your line?' he said, in just about the tone he would use if he were picking out a gunman. 'Poetry,' I said. He reached for something—something heavy, I judge, probably the inkstand-I didn't wait to find out.

"About a week after that I got to see another editor, Henly Mead. You may remember him, night man on the *Appeal*. Mead was a goodenough fellow, and a little deaf. It was that that saved me. When I told him that I wanted to do poetry he thought I said reporting. 'Look here,' he said, 'do you think you could write some good stuff about a new hotel that's just opening? Good descriptive stuff, you know, attractive and appetizing.'

"I hadn't eaten anything since the day before, and I said I thought I could. I had been looking into hotel and restaurant windows a good deal

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that day, but I did not mention that. 'Well,' he said, 'the new Walderbilt opens to-night and they're going to be good advertisers of ours, if they make a go of it. I'll give you a line to the manager and he'll take you through. You want to see everything, upstairs and down, get your stuff, then come back here and write it. We're short of men to-night and you've got a chance to see what you can do. If you make a good job of it we'll try you on something else. Be there by six-thirty and back here as soon afterward as possible, but get the stuff right.' He gave me a note on a card, and I escaped. I was tempted to throw it away and jump into the river; my faith in my reporting ability was slim.

"I didn't, though. I went up to the new place and gave my note to the manager. I thought I might as well be where it was warm, and then I might get a chance to pick up something to eat. I had an idea of asking to sample the rolls or the pie or something. It was Christmas Eve, by the way, and they made a big flourish for the occasion.

"Well, we began at the top and went down. I saw a lot of suites that cost about a dollar a minute to inhabit, but only one that interested me. It had a table in it, set for a big supper. Then we went down through the offices and into the dining rooms. We came in here first, I remember; and say, when I think how I felt then and how I feel now—well, I wouldn't dare to describe the difference. You've been a boy, waiting for the company

to get through so you could get your chance at the table. That wasn't a circumstance. I was wild, and the difference was the company wasn't going to get through. The guests were coming in, and they were having planked steaks and roast ducks and all the trimmings, and-oh, never mind, we won't dwell on it. You wouldn't have thought anything could be worse than that experience, but that's where you're mistaken. The kitchen was a good deal worse—you bet it was! There were rows of gridirons down there with a glowing fire under each one, and standing over it a man in a white apron and cook's cap, turning steaks and chops and chickens and making all kinds of mushroom things, and baking oysters and basting partridges, and the smell and sight of all that food cooking right there in easy reach put the finishing touches to my madness. I fairly had to hold on to myself hard to keep from grabbing a couple of birds or steaks and making a dash for the street.

"And all the time the manager went on talking. 'You see,' he said, 'how systematic everything is. The order comes down, is given to one of these men; he has it right before him and prepares the food according to it exactly, so there can be no mistake. He knows just what to do, how soon it is wanted,' etc., etc. I didn't listen; I only looked at those meats and fowls, with butter and pepper and gravy on them, and I know my eyes were sticking out a foot. He dragged me to another place to show me the egg-cooking machines that

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drop into boiling water, and jump out again automatically when the exact number of minutes are over. Then he showed me the dishwashing arrangements, with the boiling water and the traveling crates that are lowered into them. I suppose I nodded and said yes to everything, but I wasn't thinking of a thing but those glowing grills and those men basting and turning those beautiful steaks and birds, and the delicious, maddening smell of them followed me everywhere. We went through the pastry department, the bakery, and I don't remember where else, and there wasn't a chance to pick up a bite of any sort. We were about to go when he remarked, quite casually: 'Perhaps you would like to see where the help eat—it is just their dinner time. We call it Murphy's kitchen.'

"I don't know what I said, but we went in there. There was a long table with a lot of robust persons seated about it, helping themselves out of great pans of beans, corned meat, deep dishes of pudding, and huge coffee-pots. It was a royal feeding, nothing less. The manager said, You see, they fare well—plenty of everything, and good, well-cooked food."

"My tongue was sticking to the roof of my mouth. I wanted to ask him for a job as porter, sweeper, anything to get a chance at that table. Then I had an inspiration. 'It certainly looks very appetizing,' I managed to gasp. 'I'm almost tempted to try some of it myself.' He slapped

me on the shoulder. 'Do,' he said; 'then you can tell the public how we take care of our people as well as of our guests. Here, folks,' he said; 'here's a gentleman from the Appeal who is going to write us up and wants to sample Murphy's kitchen.

Give him a plate with something on it.'

"They were a good lot, and they filled a plate with beans and corned beef and handed me a hunk of bread, and about a second later I was in a chair, trying my best to eat like a human being. If you never tried to do that under the circumstances you don't know how hard it is. The manager said, 'Well, you find that pretty good food, don't you?' I said it tasted the best of anything I'd eaten for a long time, and God knows that was the truth. I'd been walking in the cold, I said, and was just in the mood for something substantial like that. 'Give him some more,' said the manager—which they did. Then I had pudding and coffee and was just about half filled up, but did not dare to take another helping.

"When I walked out of Murphy's kitchen I was a changed man. I may say that I was no longer a poet—the poet had been starved out; the new man was all prose: beans and corned beef, and

ready to do his job.

"I went back to the office and did it. I wrote like a house afire. When I had turned down the last page I took it in to Mead. He ran it through, then he said: 'Say, that's great stuff. Where've you been all this time, anyway? Come in in the

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morning and I'll give you something more—something good. To-morrow's, by the way, pay-day. Get your space bill in early and you'll be paid for this at twelve o'clock.'

"I don't need to tell you how beautiful those words sounded. The story made a column and a half. The cashier showed me how to make out my slip, and I got enough out of it to carry me through the week. By the end of that time I had done a lot more things and was on Easy Street. I stayed with the *Appeal* till Mead died; then I came over to you fellows on the *Mercury*."

Weldon smoked and looked into nothing, and

seemed to have finished his story.

"But," I said, that doesn't explain about you dining here, now, and signing checks and

things."

"That's so; I forgot," he nodded. "That story was a double-header—it fixed me with the Appeal and it fixed me with this hotel. The backers of the place had started it on a good deal of a gamble. They had put up all the capital they had and could borrow, and dumped it in, win or lose. The city wasn't so full of money and people as it is now, and they were taking what seemed a long chance. Well, that story of mine, coming out as it did Christmas morning, seemed to touch people where they lived, I must have put into it some of the feelings I had myself when I was looking at all those people eating that good food and something of the flavor of those cooking things that

nearly made a lunatic of me downstairs. I didn't warm up so much on the palatial suites and the gilded offices, but when I struck the dining rooms and the kitchens I turned myself loose, and I rounded off with Murphy's kitchen in a way that would make you cry. It was human-interest, heart-throb stuff, all right, and that night there were at least a thousand people in the Walderbilt eating up everything in sight and wanting to be shown through downstairs. The manager sent for me next day and had me turn the article into a booklet, which they sent all over, I suppose. He gave me a pretty good check for the job and with it a free pass, for self and friend, good till further notice. That was fifteen years ago, so you see that old column and a half has been paying dividends a good while. I've tried not to overwork my privilege and I've seldom criticized the food, even when I should have done so. Confidentially, I think the end is in sight. The old manager died last year, and the new one has less music in his soul. You can't inherit gratitude, you know. I notice the steaks I get are not what they once were. I think a tip has been passed along. Oh, well, never mind; let us gather sirloins while we may."

The waiter came just then with the dinner check. Weldon carelessly scrawled his initials, scarcely looking at it. The man disappeared, and in less than a minute, it seemed, came back.

"The manager says that Mr. Weldon's special

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arrangement has been withdrawn," he ventured, nervously.

Weldon displayed no emotion, but carelessly laid down a ten-dollar bill.

"Keep the change," he said.

PYGMALION OF THE WINDOWS

R. MORTIMER PRESBRY was just what his name sounded like, an artist—that is to say, a window dresser in a smart up-town shop on a satisfactory salary; really a very good salary for art, which is not always overpaid.

Gross emolument, however, was secondary. Mr. Presbry loved his art—loved it for art's sake in general, and in particular for a very private reason, which he never told to any one in the world—not until the great, the wonderful, the

supreme moment when—

But I forestall my story. The reason buried in the depths of Mortimer Presbry's soul was, of course, a woman. Not an ordinary woman of flesh and blood—far from it—oh, very far! A woman, indeed, with neither—one, in fact, with almost no human attributes; such lifeless, even if shapely, hands; feet quite rudimentary, almost unrecognizable as such; nothing, really nothing of consequence, below the waist line. . . .

But, ah, above! Such shoulders, such a throat, such ravishing eyes and features! Mr. Presbry believed that no sculptor had ever modeled a more superb vision of beauty than the lovely lay figure Lenore, pride of Silkman & Co.'s immense show windows, queen of Mortimer Presbry's heart.



TURNING HIS EYES UPWARD IN ADDRATION



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She had come in one day in a consignment from Paris, and Mr. Presbry had known, as soon as he saw her unpacked, that she was his affinity. All his young life he had been thrown in the society of beautiful lay figures, but never before had one given him more than momentary thrill. Sometimes at evening when the big olive-hued shades were pulled down and Mr. Presbry, his soul in his work, arrayed the beautiful, obedient units of his flock, he was fanned as it were by a breath of tenderness that was not entirely a matter of art. But this had been a vague, indefinite emotion, transitory and without consequence.

Now all was changed. Mortimer Presbry had met his fate. She was not like those others. classic features were not conventional like theirs. And then her deep, lustrous eyes, her melting lips —half parted as if about to speak—ah, she had personality, that was it, almost a soul! For the moment he did not go farther than that. Then from somewhere came the startling thought that perhaps she had been modeled from life—that somewhere she lived. Mr. Presbry's heart thrilled, then grew sad. No, it could not be-life held nothing so rare, so perfect: in any case she would be in a far land and lost to him—ah yes, lost—and it was then that he named her Lenore, for Mr. Presbry read a good many poems and knew several of those by Mr. E. A. Poe almost by heart. Lost Lenore! there was a sweet, sad beauty in the name that breathed romance to Mr. Mortimer Presbry's

soul. Even when he decided to think of her as purely a creation—the dream of some artist-poet like himself—he did not change the name.

Mr. Presbry's life became as a kind of beautiful vision which formed and floated as it were around Lenore. When at five o'clock the great emporium closed and the wide shades were closely drawn Mortimer Presbry stepped straight into dreamland. Then it was he arrayed Lenore and her court in resplendent costumes from the unrivaled assortment of Silkman & Co., reserving always the most beautiful for Lenore. It was as if she was his muse, inspiring him to such supreme flights of his art that each day an increasing throng of window shoppers collected outside, until Mr. Presbry, in time, received a substantial increase in his salary.

It was in those quiet hours behind the wide drawn shades that Mortimer Presbry really lived. Then modestly, even timidly, baring Lenore's arms as far as they went, he rearrayed her in the robe of his choice. If he blushed at certain moments of this sweet service, should we not honor him for it? Chiffon, tulle, old lace, and velvets, in what costly fabrics did he not attire Lenore? At this hour of the day she was his, and his only. They two were alone—those others about her did not count. They were, so to speak, accessories—that is to say, furniture. Lenore was never that to Mortimer Presbry. She had personality, as I have said. He touched her at such

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times as tenderly, as reverentially as if she had held somewhere within her-her organism (the actual nature of which he resolutely ignored)a pulsing, loving heart. Sometimes in the final moments of his functions he was almost overcome. Dropping on his knees to arrange the folds of the skirt and adjust the delicacies of the "hang," Mr. Presbry now and again turned his eyes upward in adoration, and even sometimes clasped his hands in an instant of pure rapture. What if he had guessed at such moments that a presence in the outer dimness, a queen-like creature—whose grace was not entirely lost in a formless wrap, whose chiseled throat and classic features were not all concealed by a disfiguring veil-through a crack of light between the shades, with lustrous, liquid eyes watched him at his ministrations! Had Mortimer Presbry guessed this he might have fainted. Possibly he would have died. Art is intense—one can never tell.

There was a gown that Mr. Presbry chose oftener than any other as being most suitable to Lenore; a truly regal robe of deep wine-colored velvet, cut, ah, how, in the neck? and with what majestic flow? My language fails in these details, but I know that its corsage, or something, was sown with amethysts and pearls, and that it seemed created only for Lenore. Clad in it, her melting eyes matching its deeper shadows, she became all that a queen should be—imperial without being supercilious, compassionate though supreme.

Mr. Presbry's fear was that the amethyst gown would be sold. Himself employing the very means to such a consummation, he yet lived in daily dread of it. When Lenore was not wearing the dress, he hid its special box far down in the drawer of rich apparels, where it would be less likely to be offered by some soulless salesman, to be bought and profaned by some unworthy purchaser.

In his quiet bachelor apartment Mr. Presbry reflected much on Lenore, and sometimes pictured her as one warm and living—magnificent, but human, even kind. It was a roseate thought, infinitely alluring. Generally it led to a state of dreamy sadness, during which Mr. Presbry at intervals repeated in a half-whisper the words "lost Lenore," and felt that in some way his life was a sweet sacrifice, a kind of apotheosis of the might have been.

But now it was that something quite serious happened. You have gathered, perhaps, that Mr. Presbry was literary—that is to say, fond of certain books. Perhaps he had written, but if so the fact has been concealed. In his snug bachelor apartment he had a handsome shelf of volumes to which he added from time to time. One evening, quite late, drifting carelessly through the *Pol* to *Ree* volume of his new encyclopædia—the handsome half-morocco installment set—his eyes caught the word "Pygmalion," and almost at a glance he had gleaned the old tale of the Greek sculptor and

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his ivory statue to whom the gods, upon earnest solicitation, had granted life.

Mr. Presbry read the brief account through again, very carefully, every word of it, aloud. Then rather suddenly he closed the book and began walking the floor. Gentle reader, do not jump to a hasty conclusion. Mortimer Presbry was not in the least what the boys at the emporium would have called a "nut." Oh, by no means. It never occurred to him that any amount of supplication would incarnate Lenore, but he did go galloping back into the past and revel rather deeply in the possibilities of what happened to Pygmalion and Galatea; he did toy lovingly with his earlier thought that so lifelike a vision as Lenore might indeed have been modeled after the living flesh, and that somewhere in the world her soul might be seeking his-its affinity-and that if he set out and sought far and wide, beyond all the horizons, he might one day find her. What then? Ah, then he would fall upon his knees and arrange her "hang"-no, not that; but he would breathe his soul out in words of adoration, after which he would bring her here, where they would dwell in a state of bliss, forever and forever.

Mr. Presbry allowed his fancy to expand. He would draw his savings and buy the amethyst gown. Also other things—oh yes—and when he came home from his work she would be arrayed in it, though waiting for him to give it the final deft touches of art. He would be her vassal, her

slave. Mornings he would prepare her dainty breakfast and serve it to her while she still reclined among the pillows clad in the flimsy dressing-robe in which he had more than once attired her at the emporium. It would be quite loose at the throat, and—but the thought suffused him. He could not go further.

Pygmalion and Galatea! He did not care especially for those names. Galatea was well enough; there was a pretty and useful fabric by that name. But Pygmalion, never! The boys at the store already called him Presto, though that was a kind of compliment. The other they would be apt to shorten to Piggy. He could not have endured that.

Mr. Presbry retired late and slept rather uneasily. When he went out for his coffee the weather was prosaically sharp and he decided that he would not immediately set out to scour the horizons for his lost Lenore. Even if she existed she would be in France. The world war was on and few in private life were going to France these days. Mortimer Presbry's taste in dress did not run to the mustard tones; besides, he was fully a year beyond the draft age. Furthermore, it was always possible that Lenore, grown tired of waiting, had entered a nunnery-she might even have wed another. Heavy thoughts, but conclusiveshe must remain his Lost Lenore. His inanimate, his unawakened Lenore was safely under lock and key, the vehicle and inspiration of his art.

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To-night he would array her in the amethyst gown.

Evening brought a shock—the imperial gown was gone! He thought it might have been misplaced. He searched madly, then asked a salesman who still lingered. Yes, he knew about it. One of the men had sold the dress during the afternoon. No, he did not remember the purchaser very well—rather slender, he thought—wore a heavy military cape and a veil. She had taken her purchases along, in her car. It was good to get the velvet sold, for it was getting just a little off the style.

Mr. Presbry sighed heavily as he laid out an array of costumes for his evening work. Then the store became empty and semi-darkened. The heavy front shades were closely drawn. He carried the boxes to the wide windows and began to consider their contents. Which of those choice creations was most worthy of Lenore?

He was still undecided when there came a rattle at the great handle of the front entrance. It was locked, and Mr. Presbry at first paid no attention. The rules of Silkman & Co. were strict. No goods were shown after hours.

But the rattle came again—this time more vigorously; very likely a salesman had forgotten something. Mr. Presbry stepped to the entrance and pulled back the shade. A large limousine stood outside, and at the door a rather slender figure, wearing a long military cape and a veil.

The light was not very good, just there, but something about the veiled profile caused Mr. Presbry's heart to behave queerly. He turned the latch with a cold hand and pulled the door open. The veiled lady stepped in and gently, but definitely, pushed it shut behind her. She did not say anything, at first; neither did Mr. Presbry. Something told him it was one of life's great moments.

The mysterious visitor was first to break the silence. Through the veil came a voice of music—such a voice as Mr. Presbry might have imagined for Lenore.

"I thought," the voice said, "that you—that you might like to see how it looked on the—on the real one; the—— I mean the original."

Still Mortimer Presbry was as silent as a stopped clock. A dainty pair of gloved hands flung back the military cape, stripped off the hat and veil. Mr. Presbry backed weakly to the counter and gripped it hard. Arrayed in all the glory of the amethyst gown, Lenore, his Lost Lenore, stood before him!

Only the evening before, in his room, Mr. Presbry had vividly, even fondly, rehearsed what he would say and do if the gods should ever bring him face to face with the living Lenore. It had been wasted preparation. He stood now quite helpless—his muscles paralyzed, his case of tetanus complete. Lenore was calmer.

"You see," she said, "I was the model for that

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figure. My father and I were in Paris; he did museum work—groups in wax, you know. But those things have gone out a good deal, of late years, and when the war came we were quite poor. So then he got a chance to make some of those fashion things. I sat for one which he made just before we came back to America."

She whom he had named Lenore paused, but Mortimer Presbry gave no sign of life other than

a silent swaying, semirotary movement.

"I saw myself in your windows," Lenore went on, "and used to pass often to look at the beautiful clothes I wore. One night I was quite late. The shades were down, but I peeked in through a crack and saw you at work. You were putting on the amethyst gown. You must have thought it becoming—you let her wear it so much. After that I came often to peek in and watch you. It was splendid; you seemed so—so in love with—with your art."

Mr. Presbry managed to make a few inarticulate sounds. Lenore added:

"You didn't seem to care so much for—for the others."

"Oh—oh—oh no," struggled Mr. Presbry, "I—I didn't. I—I——"

The splendid personage in jeweled velvet seemed

not to remark his agitation.

"I used to say," she went on, "some day I will buy the amethyst gown and let him see me in it let him see if he really—if he thinks I am—as—

as—if he thinks it becoming, I mean. Do you—do you really like me in it?"

Mr. Presbry closed his eyes. He was laboring

heavily. "Lenore," he panted, "Lenore!"

"Lenore? No, my name is Polly — Polly Dawson. But I thought as I came along just now that it ought to be Galatea, like the old story, you know. Yours is not Pygmalion, is it? Because, sometimes, those nights when I watched you, I thought you might be thinking—kind of wishing, you know—that she was not—that she might be a real person, I mean. Or was it just your art that made you—look at her that way, and clasp your hands sometimes, and—"

Mr. Presbry awoke to an explosive protest. "Oh no!" he gasped; "oh no! oh no!" He seemed possessed with repeating these words until they died away at last into an almost whispered "Lenore—my lost Lenore!"

"But I am not lost, and I am not Lenore. I am Polly Dawson, and I don't think you like my name, and I think you like the old lay figure better than—better in the amethyst gown, I mean—than the original."

Whereupon Mortimer Presbry arose to the occasion.

"Lenore, Galatea, Miss Dawson," he said, "if I am not dreaming, I am in heaven. You are my only love—my queen of queens—my dream come true. I will toil for you—I will slave for you—I will die for you—I—"

PYGMALION OF THE WINDOWS

"You don't need to do any of those things," laughed Polly Lenore Galatea Dawson. "My only uncle was in the munitions business. He died last week and left us a million dollars. Don't bother with the old windows to-night. Come home with me in the car to dinner and meet the finest father in the world."

AN ORDEAL OF ART

IF you have tried to get a room in New York City lately—or anywhere, for that matter you have had an interesting time. Not exactly the kind of a time I had, perhaps, but something picturesque. You have threaded an anxious way through the Sunday papers, of course; you have climbed endless stairs and been shot up in elevators, warm with anticipation as you went up, clammy with a fear of bankruptcy as you came down. You have groped through caves and tunnels; you have looked out of skyless windows on the third floor; you have grown dizzy peering down from some perch under the roof, which you knew about the middle of July would turn into a fireless cooker and broil you and stew you in your own juice. You will recognize the variety also, the one feature common to all the places-I mean the price. You realized at once when you heard it that you could not pay it and at the same time continue to eat meals which anybody could respect. Let us not dwell on this painful aspect of a world in the throes of reconstruction. The wounds still bleed.

I had to move, just as you did. Never mind why—that is a sore point, too. Like you, I went out and hunted—like you, I came home each



I HAD A FEELING OF BEING AT A PRIVATE WILD WEST SHOW



AN ORDEAL OF ART

night with that dull conviction that in a little while-just a little while-I should be choosing between the river and the open road. Then, as the novels say, something happened. Joe Hamby told me of a room which he felt sure would suit me; he was just giving it up. Nice large room, he said, near the Subway, one flight up, good light, price reasonable by the present scale. He told me the tariff, and it certainly seemed so. he said, it was in a private house, occupied by an old lady with a taste for art. Knowing, as I did, something of collecting, Joe said he was sure it would suit me exactly. The old lady, he said, was the kindest soul in the world—a collector herself, and had also painted in earlier life. He said that it was mainly on account of his lack of taste that he was leaving; that, lovely as the old lady was, they had few points in common; that they were not affinities, as it were, in the world of art. Anyway, his firm was sending him to Mexico, he said, where he would probably be shot or kidnapped, and he spoke as if the idea somehow afforded him relief. I judged he had enjoyed an overdose of art, and, knowing his purely practical and material nature, I thought I understood.

Furthermore, I was pleased—I may say overjoyed. The thought of a large light apartment in an atmosphere of quiet refinement with this gentle old lady of taste as the presiding spirit was really more than I had ever dared to hope. I did not wait to see the place, but told Hamby to secure

it for me—to take it by telephone. He did this, and was already gone when I arrived, Monday morning.

Now, at this point, I want to be quite fair to the motherly soul who became then, and still is, my landlady. She opened the door for me, herself, and I was cheered and warmed by her smile of welcome. Then, almost immediately, I experienced a slight chill. It was caused by certain objects I noticed in the hall. A pair of vases impressed me first. They were very large, and placed, one on either side of the hall-tree. I had never seen such vases before except once on Fourteenth Street, in an auction-room window. Very likely my landlady had collected them there. I am sure they were rare. The man who made them could hardly have had time to make another pair before they shot him for making those. I will not try to describe them-words seem weak in that relation.

Besides, I had noticed other things. The hall-tree itself had its points. They were horns, in fact, and two of them projected from the head of an Indian chief, which some gifted house-painter, dead to shame, had painted above the looking-glass. The other horns projected from anywhere, without motive or direction. They were to hang things on. The hall carpet—well, time and wear had done something for that—but the walls! The paper was an explosion, and the pictures—there were Indians among those, too, and a papier-maché

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head of an excited buffalo. My landlady had answered nobly to the call of the wild, I could see that. Mrs. Griffin—such being the good lady's name—pushed open the parlor door, but I paused on the threshold. I caught a glimpse of family portraits—done in crayon—and turned resolutely away. I said, weakly, that I would like to go at once to my room—that I wasn't feeling very well. I was thinking at the moment of Paul Cooper—Paul who is on the fine-arts committee at the Metropolitan and has been my friend and counselor for several years. I was thinking of the time soon when he would be coming to see me. I imagined him entering Mrs. Griffin's hall. Things go hard with Paul.

But a little later that violent portal seemed mild by comparison. I stood in my own room—the large, light room of my anticipation. Large it was, certainly, and a perfect flood of day streamed in at the two tall front windows. Every corner of that room was radiant—nothing was concealed or subdued—ah, me!

There were tables in the room; there was a piano; there was a couch; there were chairs; there was a bed, and let me hasten at once to do justice to the bed—it was snowy and soft and all that a bed should be. Perhaps the other things were equally commendable, only I was not prepared for them. Their designs and colors were so peculiar. And the things on the piano, the tables, even in some of the chairs, were of a nature to

make strong men turn pale—to send even a robust materialist like Joe Hamby cheerfully to assassination by Mexican bandits. I didn't suppose there was such a weird display of crockery and carving and burnt leather as that this side of purgatory. The couch with its soft, downy pillows, but I will not dwell on those—most of them were painted—hand painted—and there were Indians here, too, and cupids, and poetry, and—Oh, what's the use!

Still, these were as nothing, or seemed so, when I turned my eyes to the walls. They were wide walls, solid as to color, for somebody had told her that one must have a plain background for pictures. But you hardly noticed the tone of the walls—there wasn't enough of it to show. You could see only the pictures. From one end of the room to the other, and across the ends—above the piano, above the bed, above the couch and tables they marched, a solid front of art. They were paintings, most of them, her collection, done by herself. I was speechless, and she thought I was overwhelmed, which was true.

"I was very talented, as a girl," she explained, "and I took up painting at boarding school. Landseer, the great animal artist, was all the fashion then, and we copied his designs. That one of the 'Stag at Bay' was my first attempt, and nearly all the others were done while I was in school. That one of 'Pharaoh's Horses' is the last one I did. That was after I was married."

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She sighed. "Married life so often interferes with art, and I gave up my painting, to collect things. I have always made this room my art gallery, because it is so nice and light. I still keep adding things to it. I have some scroll candlesticks downstairs, now, that you can have if you want them."

My eyes took in the contents of the walls—animals, mainly hounds pursuing deer, or dragging them down; landscapes with perfectly solid waterfalls and green-cotton foliage; fruit pieces in which the bananas and oranges would have required a hammer and chisel to cut them, and one photograph—one dear and lovely note in all this array of horror, a portrait of the artist herself, at seventeen.

I stood before it wondering how that innocentlooking lamb could have committed these crimes. She explained that it was herself, and added:

"I always keep it here with the collection. I want to give it all to some museum when I'm gone—or even before, if I could find just the right place. I've offered it to the Metropolitan, but they couldn't find room for it. Such a nice gentleman came to look at it—a Mr. Cooper, I think his name was—"

"Paul Cooper? Was he here?"

"Oh yes, and seemed so pleased with everything, and so sorry that they couldn't avail themselves of the collection—I think that was the expression he used."

I felt pretty weak. Paul had seen this ghastly place and lived, but what would he think to find me living in it?

"Mr. Hamby said that you were interested in art collections and might find some good place for mine," she rambled on cheerfully. "Do you think

you might?"

I could not reply, for the instant. I was strongly moved to tell her that there was just one place for a collection like that—a place not often named in polite circles. Then the impulse passed and I was moved to say:

"Madam, your wish does you the greatest credit. I will make every effort in my power to help you carry it out. My influence in the art world is very slight, but such as it is it is yours to command."

She trembled a little with emotion. "I see you understand," she said, "and care for such things, as I do. I have two more paintings that I've always kept in my room, because they were my favorites, but I will bring them up to you; there is just enough room for them at the foot of your bed. You ought to have them to enjoy a little, as they are likely to go to a museum."

What was the use? Nothing could make the

place worse.

"Yes," I said, "there is a little space here, and I could see them first thing in the morning."

She disappeared and presently came bringing them. They were the "Challenge" and the "Monarch of the Wilderness," and just filled the

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space. She disappeared, and I settled down to the nightmare which was to be my steady diet henceforth, perhaps forever. By and by I denuded one of the smaller tables, placed it in front of the window, and sat with my face to the street, trying to forget the fearful array behind me. Mrs. Griffin came in during the afternoon, bringing the candlesticks and a china cat. Next day she brought me a burnt-leather bear, and a crockery hen, quite large, sitting (or setting) on a nest. I thanked her, for it did not matter—nothing mattered any more. I had put my own few little prints and things into the closet. She had looked at them thoughtfully, but with no outspoken disapproval. Her heart was always kind.

It was about the end of my second week in the torture chamber that I heard from Maria Crosby -Maria J. Crosby, tall, angular, and forty-five, who had gone down to the mountains of east Tennessee, to try to bring a little light into the lives of the hill people—mostly moonshiners—of that retired district. I have never been stirred by Maria's beauty, though admiring her resolute instincts of reform. I had thought the mountains of Tennessee a good place for Maria, and hoped she would stay there. Her letter did not change me in that particular, but as I read I began to see Maria herself in a new light. I began to see her with a halo, as a glorified being, so to speak, moving among the lowly habitations of those remote hills. Read, and you will understand my emotions.

You will never guess [wrote Maria Crosby] the poverty of the lives of these people, so far as anything in the way of culture is concerned—not a book, not a picture, not an object of any sort that would direct their thoughts to anything beyond their hopeless and meager and sordid daily round. Many of them do not read, and never even saw a book, or a picture. In my school I have hung up a few magazine prints, and half the parents in the district have come in to look at them. Now, I have a plan. An uncle of mine, who can afford it, is going to furnish money to build me an annex—a sort of library and museum, where I can gather from my friends the things they want to get rid of-mere trash to them-everybody has such things-but precious beyond price to these starved souls. Can't you collect such a bunch of junk as that, and ship it to me for the new room? Send anything—anything; it can't be too bad-books, I can use, but mainly pictures and things to look at, for they are not yet to the reading stage. You are on the ground where such things grow. Gather the harvest and send it to me-you will be a benefactor, blest through the ages. I know it's mean to ask this of you, but you will understand, and do itwon't you?

Blessed Maria Crosby! Your age and angularity fell away as I scanned those lines, and left you a radiant angel. Three minutes later I was in deep converse with Mrs. Griffin. I said I had found

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for her the place of all others for her works and her collection. I told her of the nobility of Maria J. Crosby, and how she was struggling to lead those benighted souls to the light. I read portions of her letter, editing it a good deal in spots, but only in a worthy cause. I became really eloquent, in passages, and the good lady was in tears when I finished. Then she rose to the occasion, as I hoped and believed she would, and made the supreme sacrifice. She said it would be far away, and she would never see her treasures again, but no matter-she had not long, perhaps, to live, and she would have lived to some purpose. She would send everything, she said, reserving nothing. Even the rare vases and things in the lower hall should go. She would keep only the family portraits in the parlor. I did not touch on that point—the door of that deadly mausoleum was always closed, anyway. She asked me if I would attend to the shipping. I pressed her hand and said I would.

I wrote Maria Crosby that night, and there was a van at the door next morning. I did not believe either of the women would change her mind, but I wanted those things on the way. Mrs. Griffin wept copiously as she saw her treasures carried out, and I had to support her as the van drove away. I went down and paid the shipping people something extra to get that stuff packed and on board a train, going south. I would have paid something to have had the train wrecked, if there

had been any danger of its coming back. When I returned I hung my own poor little prints and things on the empty walls. Mrs. Griffin came in and looked about, sighing heavily.

"It seems too bad," she said, "but it was in a

righteous cause."

And when, some weeks later, I got a letter from Maria Crosby fairly drenching me with compliments, a letter I could show to Mrs. Griffin, who received a noble share of its gratitude, and when I turned from her tears to my own reconstructed walls I knew that we had not lived in vain.

ENGLISHMAN'S LUCK

A LONG time ago, during a real-estate excitement in the West, I spent several weeks in one of the feverish boom cities of that time and locality. Where a Western boom is in progress the land agent abounds. Not the steady-going, conservative highwayman of the Atlantic States, with white waistcoat and ministerial air, but the joyous-hearted rough-rider of the plains, who charges anywhere from ten to fifty per cent for his service and will "locate" anything on a farm to sell it, from a silver mine to a covey of quails.

Such a one was Willis Wilkins, who was perhaps the most genial freebooter that ever demanded a purse at the point of plausibility. Shortly after my arrival I made his acquaintance, at a price which I do not now consider excessive when I recall the entertainment I subsequently enjoyed during a period in which I made his office my temporary headquarters—this being while I waited with some eagerness for the tenderfoot who was to succeed me in my purchase, with a resulting profit to both Wilkins and myself.

It is no part of this story to mention that these expectations were not entirely realized. I was satisfied in time to offset an apparent loss by

certain physical benefits, due to what Wilkins referred to as "our glorious climatic conditions."

Wilkins always kept his horse and buggy hitched at the door of his office, ready for instant use. Frequently when he had an errand in the country alone he would ask me to accompany him. These trips he enlivened with stories of various properties which he pointed out as we went along. He seemed to know every bit of land for miles around, and had been more or less concerned in their mortgage or sale from time to time. On one of these trips we passed a beautiful farm where the buildings, hedges, and crops indicated more than usual care and prosperity. Wilkins whipped up his horse and drove by it in silence. This was so remarkable that I ventured an inquiry concerning the ownership of the place.

"I'll tell you," said he mournfully. "That farm recalls a sad memory. I've sold it, I reckon, oftener than any farm in the country, and never got one good square commission out of it all put together. You see," he continued, "it was a dry farm—couldn't get a drop of water anywhere on it. One of the finest farms in the country, only for that. Every man that got it bought it cheaper than the one before, and every one tried his hand at well-digging. Then he'd give up and put the thing in my hands again to get what I could, over and above a certain price.

"Well, every man that came along would see all those dry wells and beat me down on the price



THE FARMERS SEEMED TO ENJOY THE JOKE



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until I wouldn't get enough out of it to pay for buggy grease. Then he'd try some scheme of wellboring himself, and make a failure of it, like the rest. After a while there were dry wells in about every field on the place, and it used to make me nearly crazy trying to steer men away from those holes when I was making a sale. I kept a map of them in the office, and when I had nothing else to do I used to get out that map and study it. Even then I'd run on to excavations every few days that I hadn't kept track of and didn't have down on the chart. The last man that sold the place had more money than the others, and stayed with the well business longer. He filled up all the superfluous wells around the house, and dug another one, bigger and deeper and drier than any of the rest.

"Then he went back East along with the others, and I had that Jonah of a farm on my hands again.

"I don't know how many people I took over that place after that, but they every one inquired about the water, and stumbled onto one or more of the outlying wells in spite of all I could do. I finally gave up all hope of getting any commission out of it, as usual.

"One morning there was a dandy-looking Englishman came into the office and said he wanted to look at a farm. He didn't seem like a farmer, and he wasn't—then. He thought he was, though. He had filled himself up with theories, and had come out West to try them. Well, I

brought him out here, thinking maybe he'd have some new theories on well boring, too, and I could get that place off on him as a sort of experimental station.

"He looked all over the house, and suggested improvements here and there, such as he said they had in England. Then he looked at the barns, and got up on the fence and gazed over the fields, and climbed down and dug a little in the dirt with the toe of his boot. From the way he made his investigations I concluded that he didn't want any farm at all, and was glad enough when he said he was ready to go back to town. When we got about halfway home he came out of a deep study and asked me what the place was worth. I didn't expect to sell, anyway, so I put a little raise on the price over what I'd asked the last man that went over the place. Then he went into another study, and awoke in a half an hour to remark that he had overlooked the watersupply, but that he supposed there was a good well on the place. I told him that there was as fine a well there as I ever saw. I didn't need to tell him that he might take his choice out of about fifty of them all over the place, and you could have knocked me over with a straw when he said that he'd drive out in the morning and look at the well, and if the water was good, and plenty of it, he'd take the place.

"It didn't take me long to make up my mind what to do. I got that fellow to his hotel as fast

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as possible, and went back out in the country at a two-forty gait. All the way out I hired men with wagons and barrels and water-supply. I hired everything I could get hold of in the shape of waterhaulers, and I stayed with the job to see it through. This ground here holds water pretty well after you get it wet, and by morning we had that hole, big as it was, about half full of mixed water. I told the farmers that it was an Englishman that was going to get the place, and they, being mostly Populists, seemed to enjoy the joke, and worked like troopers. I went back to town for breakfast and to get my Englishman out there as soon as possible, before the tide got low. All the way out he talked to me about his farming theories, and I could see that he was eager for the place and thought it dirt cheap. When we got there he noticed all the wagon tracks made the night before, and asked what they meant. I had expected that, and explained to him that it had got noised around that the farm was about to be sold that day, and that neighbors with dry wells had come during the night to lay in a supply, thinking maybe he wouldn't let them get water there afterward. Then I got a bucket out of the barn and drew up some of it. He looked at it and said it was pretty murky, but I told him that came from dipping so much. Then he tasted of it, and said it had a taste of mixed properties which he couldn't place exactly, but supposed it would be all right when it got settled. I told him

that there was no doubt of it. Then I got him away as quick as possible, for it seemed to me that the water was already settling a good deal too fast to suit me. He remarked as we were leaving that he supposed there were other wells

on the place, and I said, 'Oh yes.'

"When we got back to town again I drew up the papers and he paid over the money, as innocent as a child. Then he went after his family, that was visiting in Chicago, and was gone two weeks. Two days after he was gone they had the big earthquake in Charleston, and we got a good healthy shock here. Some of the people were scared up about it, and I was feeling a little remorseful myself, thinking there might be another kind of an earthquake when that Englishman got back. I was sitting in my office reflecting on it next morning, when one of the men that I had hired to haul water came in. He was grinning all over, and I asked him what was so funny. He said he wanted me to come out and look at the Englishman's wells. I couldn't see the point, and he explained it.

"He said that in the morning after the earthquake shock he had passed the 'dry-well farm,' as they called it, and saw water running across the road out of the pasture. He had followed it

up, and what do you reckon he found?

"That earthquake had opened up an underground river, and every well on the place had from ten to a thousand feet of water in it, and

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two artesians that had been bored in a low place were full and running over.

"I never was so cast down in my life. That farm was worth more than five times what I got for it, and after all my hard work and trouble with it, then to have a smart Alec of an Englishman come in and get all the benefit! Somehow it sort o' shook my faith in Providence. And ever since then," concluded Wilkins, bitterly, "the neighbors have been hauling water from there, sure enough. They never told that blooming Englishman of the trick they played on him, and he has never known any difference"

IN the electric light I saw that it was not Mc-Gowan, though he was fitting a key into Mc-Gowan's front door. Then I remembered that all the McGowans were away for the summer. He must have heard my footstep, for he turned and saw me. Then he started to run.

"Stop!" I shouted. "Stop, or I'll shoot!"

That seemed to frighten him. He stumbled and rolled into the weeds. I leaped upon his shoulders.

"No resistance—you're my prisoner!"
"That's so," he grunted. "I'm it."

"I guess you'll have to stop with me for a while," I said, pulling him up. "I've got free lodgings for fellows like you."

He took it cheerfully.

"Good enough. How's the fare?"

"You'll know to-morrow. Come on, now, and no tricks."

We marched toward the jail. I had been in office but a week, and was proud of my first capture. He seemed inclined to be sociable.

"Pleasant weather we're having now."

I agreed that it was warm for May.

"Great things, these electric lights."

I assented to this, too, adding that they were a protection to honest people.

"Yes," he nodded, "the profession hasn't much show these days."

We were at the jail presently. I halted in the lighted corridor, and pushing open a door, stood aside for him to enter.

"This is your room. Hope you'll find it comfortable."

He looked about approvingly.

"Hm! Southern exposure—head to the north—very nice, thank you."

"Glad you like it. Anything I can do further?"

"Well, you might send up a pitcher of ice water."

"Of course—certainly."

"And I rise early—suppose you have me called for my bath at seven."

I was going through his well-made clothes. He was unarmed. His pockets contained a little—a very little—change, and a small bunch of antiquated keys.

"Couldn't do much with those things," I commented.

"It is rather a poor outfit," he agreed. "Lucky I struck these free lodgings. I suppose I'm good here till court sits."

"Yes-second week in September."

"Just fits in with my plans. I think I'll like it here first rate. Good night."

I went away, grinning at his assurance. There was something free and Western about it that appealed to me. I returned presently with a

pitcher of cold water, and even apologized for not having ice. I rather pitied this gentlemanly housebreaker, who was trying to earn a dishonest living with such meager appliances.

I rose early, to have a look at him by daylight. I listened a moment at his cell, then called through the little grated window.

"Seven o'clock!" I said. "You wanted an early call!"

There was no answer, and I saw now that his bed was unoccupied. Neither was he anywhere in that end of the cell which I could see. I had rather a queer sensation, and somewhat hastily unlocked the door. The cell was empty.

I sat down for a minute on the stool in the corner. Clearly I had dreamed the whole thing. That accounted for much that had seemed curious at the time, and became unreal, now, by daylight. Then my eyes fell upon the pitcher in the corner. I noticed, too, that while the bed was neatly made it appeared to have been used.

I began to have an uncanny feeling, and wasted no time in getting out into the morning sunshine. As I opened the door at the end of the corridor I saw that somebody was sitting on the step. He turned just then, and I recognized him. It was my guest of the night before.

"Good morning!" he greeted. "It was pleasant outside, so I didn't wait for my call. I have been enjoying the sunrise."

I only stared at him. The dream was still going

on. I would wake presently and find myself in bed.

"By the way, your locks are rather poor," he added. "You forgot to leave me a key last night, but it made no difference."

Still I said nothing. I was probably just waking. I did not wish to form the habit of talking in my sleep. My guest continued:

"You don't seem cheerful this morning. Didn't you rest well? I did, and this sun is glorious. I

never felt better."

I found it necessary to speak.

"Look here," I said, "I want you to tell me three things. First, whether I am awake or not. Next, if I am awake, whether or not I locked you up last night. Finally, if I did, how in the name of common sense you got out here."

My guest smiled. I noticed now that his face was rather refined—almost aristocratic; that his hands were smooth and white, with fingers long and tapering. Wonderful fingers! To me they always seemed sentient—each with a consciousness of its own. He moved over and made room for me.

"Sit down," he said, "and let's consider. First, as to being awake, authorities differ as to what really constitutes the three conditions known as being awake, asleep, and dead, besides which there are several mesmeric phases and the more unusual trance state. As one slightly versed in such matters I should not consider you asleep, mesmerized,

or in a trance. I therefore conclude that you are awake and in possession of the ordinary faculties. Next, as to whether you locked me in my room last night, that depends upon what you consider a lock. To the infant or weak-minded person the ordinary catch might constitute a lock. To many others a very simple contrivance such as will yield to the common shingle nail will prove a perfect safeguard. Your ordinary lodger doubtless feels safe behind the rather pretty mechanism which upon my door was not a difficult problem. From the ordinary lodger's standpoint, I may say that you did lock me in my room last night. Finally, as to how I got out here, you answered that question when you said 'in the name of common sense.' Common sense, coupled with some slight knowledge of the subject in hand. Have I covered the ground?"

I pulled myself together.

"Perfectly," I acknowledged. "I disagree only on the last proposition. Those are good new locks on our cells. The county is rather proud of them. It required something more than common sense and a little ingenuity to open them. It took very uncommon sense for one thing, and perhaps you'd better come in now and let me go over you again for those skeleton keys. I appreciate the fact that you didn't run away, and I want to treat you well, but business is business. It's against the rules of the house to let guests come and go as they like. I'm a new man here, and the public eye is upon me."

He returned to his cell quite willingly, and carefully, very carefully, I examined his various pockets and linings, feeling him over inch by inch. There was literally nothing on his person that I could discover. I looked at him helplessly. He smiled—a pleasant, reassuring smile.

"Don't worry," he consoled; "I'm not likely

to leave. I might go farther and fare worse."

He followed quite submissively to a cell across the way, where there was a lock of an altogether different pattern.

"I'll bring your breakfast down myself," I said. "Don't go, please, before I come," and went out, carefully locking the door.

To say that I was mystified sounds paltry. I was by no means sure that I was awake. If awake, I was all the more perplexed. As a boy I had been a student of magic; still later, of the occult. I had heard of beings who could become shadow or substance at will, and thus pass through iron bars and stone walls. Perhaps he was one of these. I began to be less proud of my first capture. One such prisoner would make my whole jail a laughing-stock. Those who had opposed my election would not be slow in crying incompetency. After all, I had a poor case against him—I had merely found him experimenting with a door. No one as yet knew of his presence. I wished he would get out and stay out.

I rose and took a turn across the room. Then I went to the window and looked down on the wide

jail yard, in one corner of which was a vegetable garden. A man was weeding one of the beds. Then I stood stock still and stared. The man in

the garden was my guest.

"I came out to think it over," he began as I drew near, "and to have a little exercise before breakfast. We always had a garden at home, and I notice yours needs weeding. I shall be very glad to care for it as a slight exchange for your hospitality."

I nodded weakly, and he went on:

"You see the situation is peculiar—even delicate. You have jumped at a conclusion—a belief that you found me engaged in a matter which would entitle me to free lodgings until the fall term of court—perhaps longer. Now, you may be mistaken. There is, at least, room for doubt. The evidence thus far would hardly convince the public of my claim. Furthermore, as the people's servant you doubtless have enemies who are eager to pick flaws in your system. Suppose, therefore, you allow me the freedom of your very comfortable hostelry in exchange for small but willing service. Unless you tell them, no one need know the exact nature of our connection. I may be regarded as a harmless lunatic, a hired man, or a poor relation. Later, we might drop the present arrangement. Suppose we hear your opinion now?"

I had stumbled over to the fence, and was lean-

ing against it heavily.

"Opinion," I echoed feebly. "My opinion is

that you are not a creature of flesh and blood. That you are a spook—a spirit—and I beg you will go your way. I will not detain you. It is not for me to make terms with a ghost!"

He laughed gently.

"You will find I am flesh and blood at meal time," he said, "which, by the way, reminds me that it must be near the breakfast hour."

That was my weird summer. I was still young thirty years ago, and before I went West had been interested in curious things. I set myself now to solve this mystery—the secret of his power.

I tried to watch him. When I locked him in his cell he showed no desire to leave it so long as I was near. Absent for a moment, I would be likely to hear the lawnmower, and would look out to find him cutting grass. The jail grounds were never so well kept as that summer, nor the garden ever so fruitful.

I tried friendship. I had installed him as a harmless eccentric, helping me for his board. I now proceeded to make his stay pleasant. Books, pictures, a carpet, and some furniture were placed in his quarters, and I invited him to my private table. His conversation was usually cultured and interesting, but gave me no clue as to his secret. Indeed his habit was to treat the whole matter lightly, as if so slight a thing as opening a few patent locks without visible means was of small consequence. On the whole, perhaps it was to him. In the light of subsequent events I am inclined to think so.

It was during the first week of September that the cashier of our local bank fell dead one morning, just before opening time. Then it was found that nobody else knew the combination of the safenobody but the president, who was somewhere in London or Paris. The figures were thought to be among the cashier's papers, but no one could find the memorandum. Such a matter is of importance in a country town. The news reached me by ten o'clock, with the fact that the bank would telegraph to Chicago for experts if by noon the combination slip did not come to light.

I hurried over and saw the vice-president in his private office. I did not go into details. I merely told him that I had a fellow helping around the jail who seemed to know a good deal about locks. I added that of course I could not say as to his experience with combinations, but that he seemed to have a faculty for opening such locks as I had been able to offer him. Perhaps he could work the bank's combination without hurting the safe, and save the expense of Chicago experts.

The vice-president was incredulous, but willing to let the fellow try. If he succeeded they would pay him something handsome. Of course it would be impossible. Their safe was one of the best. Even experts would doubtless use tools. Still, he might try.

Sands was picking beans when I found him-Sefton Sands was the name he had given me. He put down his pan to listen.

"I want you to do it, Sands—for me That bank was against me in the election. I am likely to need them by and by."

"What make of safe is it?" he asked casually, as we drifted in the direction of the bank; he

declined to hurry.

I told him. He smiled.

"That's rather a different job from those toy locks of yours."

"But you'll do it!"

"I'll try. Stranger things have happened."

We had reached the bank by this time. A little crowd was collected about the doorway, but we pushed through into the back office, where the big safe was embedded in the wall. Sands walked directly over to it, merely nodding to the vice-president. The banker's smile was a mixture of toleration and contempt.

"Well," he laughed, "I suppose you can open

it."

Sands laid his fingers on the lock, but made no reply.

"Pretty good safe, eh?" sneered the banker.

Perhaps Sands was a bit annoyed.

"Oh, yes," he admitted pleasantly. "Pretty good old bread-box; but I wouldn't keep cookies in it, if I were you."

The banker flushed.

"Oh, you wouldn't! Well, I'll just give you a hundred dollar bill if you open that old bread-box!"

Perhaps Sands did not hear him. He was bending very close to the combination knob, beginning to turn it with those tapering, sentient fingers. Somehow we all became still, watching those marvelous fingers as if fascinated. They were brown now from the sun, but the way they slipped and crept and hovered about the secret of that nickel disk wrought a spell of silence upon the little group of watchers. Something in it all suggested the cat stealing noiselessly upon its prey. It was almost hypnotic.

It may have been only a minute—it may have been five—but presently the fingers hesitated, ceased. A wave of disappointment swept in upon me. A smile grew on the banker's face.

For an instant only—the cat had but gathered for the final spring. So fast the eye could not follow, the fingers sent the revolving disk spinning to the right. An instant's pause, and a second spinning, to the left—shorter this time. Then once more to the right—to the left—to the right—a slight clicking sound, and Sands stood facing us.

"Your safe is unlocked, sir. I will allow you to open it."

This was just before court opened. The stir it created made my position harder. For the life of me I did not know what to do with Sands. It seemed impossible that he should be guilty—absurd that he should have engaged in common thievery when all doors alike were open to him.

Yet I had taken him into custody, and thus far he had never really denied his guilt. If he remained he ought to be brought to trial. Trial would mean explanations. The situation was becoming very "delicate" indeed. Perhaps I should convey its urgency to Sands, and advise him to escape. It seemed an unusual thing for an officer to do, but on the whole the conditions were unusual. I grew thin thinking of the conditions, and on the night before court opened did not feel like retiring.

It was long after midnight when I went quietly down the corridor to his cell. His lamp was lit—but, looking in, I could not see him. Rather eagerly I unlocked the door. Sands's cell was empty, and a note lay under the shaded lamp.

DEAR SHERIFF, AND FRIEND,—It grieves me to go without saving good-by, but I do not wish to embarrass you with further responsibility. As it is, your conscience may rest clear. I was not trying to enter that house last spring; I wished only to open the door of your acquaintance. For reasons I will not explain, my supply of funds was low and temporary seclusion desirable. I needed quiet summer retirement where I could complete certain plans and exchange light exercise for summer board. Well-meaning people annoy me sometimes, and I felt that they might be less likely to seek me out in your cozy retreat. You have treated me like a gentleman, and in return I have only been able to keep your garden in order, and to oblige you in the little matter of the banker's safe, which, though having no wish to be in the public's eye, I was willing to undertake at your request. The banker's reward will

carry me to where I have reason to believe there is a piece of art work needed that is likely to pay very well. Please keep the little bunch of antiques—some people might call them keys—as a memento of our friendship. They were only intended to unlock your sympathy. Put with them, for contrast, the enclosed, from

Yours gratefully,

SEFTON SANDS.

I shook the envelope and something fell out. It was a slender piece of steel wire, sharp at the ends, half circular in form, probably to fit some hiding place. It seemed very stiff, yet appeared to have been variously bent and straightened. I worked with it for an hour—bending, straightening, and twisting it in the cell lock. It was of no avail in my clumsy fingers. I should have remained imprisoned through the ages had my release depended on that bit of steel.

A week later the papers were filled with accounts of the Great Burglary of the Metropolitan National. It was without parallel in the history of bank robberies. A tunnel requiring months to construct had culminated with a piece of lock work of such surpassing skill that bankers, detectives, and safe manufacturers were alike appalled. A vast sum of money had been obtained.

I read these accounts with interest, and rather guiltily telegraphed Sands's description. Nothing

A KNAVE OF KEYS

came of it. The burglars were never captured, and my conclusions may have been quite absurd. Yet I have somehow always connected the affair of the Metropolitan National with the "piece of art work" referred to by Sefton Sands.

REFORMING JULIUS

HANKY DIBBS looked thoughtfully into his tall glass of sparkling grape juice, then, lighting a cigarette, contemplated the somewhat dejected faces of his companions.

"It's all right," he said. "I've always been for prohibition—at least for a number of years—twenty-three, to be exact—twenty-three, this

summer."

Hanky Dibbs sighed, as if reviewing his golden youth-time. One of the circle asked, lifelessly:

"Anything about that particular number of

years?"

Hanky shook his head; then presently, and without encouragement, told this rather pointless and uncheerful story.

"I was quite a young man," he said, "in Kansas—when Kansas had gone prohibition and been through a boom. We didn't fully realize the situation, at first—that is, we didn't accept it. We pretended that the boom wasn't over and that prohibition hadn't begun yet. We went on marking up the prices on our town lots, and ordering refreshments from the neighboring states in such form and variety as our considerate officials did not think it worth while to notice. We didn't



FOR A MAN OF HIS RACE, JULIUS WAS A LAMB



REFORMING JULIUS

make much of a success of our bluffs. The liquid things were full of damage, but they seldom did credit to a gentleman's taste when he offered them to a friend. As for our lots, we could mark them up, but we couldn't sell them.

"A friend of mine named Del Yokum and I were long on lots. We had bought a good deal of a cornfield, at front-foot prices, when it was really worth about eleven dollars an acre in cultivation, and nothing at all, planted with lot markers and lamp posts and goldenrod. There wasn't a thing on it that was worth anything except the mortgage, and that wasn't worth its face. We didn't mention that, though, even to each other. We went around telling how our lots were right in the direction the town was growing, and getting more valuable every day. Of course, there might be a slight temporary lull in the demand, but that was only to give the market a chance to gather itself. The East had its eyes on our town and especially on our part of it. There was nothing like it

"Well, there happened to live a fellow named Julius Myers in Hamville—that was the name of our town—a stout Hebrew person who ran a shoe store and did something in real estate on the side. Julius was a good fellow, but too easy. He had a taste for liquid things, and when he was feeling mellow would buy carelessly. He seemed willing to take almost anything that was offered him, and it was really pitiful the things he bought,

beyond the Mississippi.

though he had luck, too, for he got rid of them better than you would expect. I don't remember that he ever really lost on any of his deals, which were mostly for little houses right in the town, but of course we knew it was only a question of time when somebody would attend to his case in

a thorough and systematic way.

"Del Yokum and I talked it over. Somebody, we said, would import an assortment of beverages and light on Julius and sell him enough worthless ground to ruin him. We agreed that Julius ought to be reformed, and that the way to do it was to teach him a lesson. Not a fatal lesson, but just a little one—one just about the size of our interest in the cornfield addition. We said that was

what Iulius needed to reform him.

"We discussed the matter a good deal and finally decided to invite Julius to a picnic and take along the necessary soul-warming juices and sell him those lots. Then, when he came to and found out what could happen to him under such circumstances, he would begin right away to lead a changed life. We said it was the only way to cure Julius and that it was up to us to do it. It was Del's idea, but I examined it carefully and tested it out in every way I could think of, and it seemed to me fine and righteous in every particular. Del said he had a case of material that he thought would put Julius in the right frame of mind to see possibilities in those cornfield lots of ours and to want to own them. He said Julius

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had a passion for Sunday picnics and would certainly accept our invitation.

"He did that. We went around to his shoe place about closing time and mentioned that the woods were at their best now, and that one ought to get out into them as much as possible—especially one shut in, as he was, most of the day. Del was going on to say some more, but Julius saved him the trouble. He walked straight in at our front gate, so to speak. He proposed a picnic himself. For a man of his race, Julius was a lamb, I'll say that.

"Well, we laid ourselves out to make it entertaining for him. We got a light covered wagon, the kind we used to call a hack, and put in a basket of things to eat—chicken and pie—and took along a lump of ice, and packed our medicine in the bottom of the wagon, with some straw, where it wouldn't be too well advertised. Then we drove around and got Julius, who brought out a basket of his own. It was certainly a fine summer morning, and I can't remember that I was ever in a more cheerful frame of mind.

"It was a nice place we went to—a shady bend of a little river, where we could lie on the moss and listen to the birds sing and see the fish jump. Julius said they were bass and that he wished he had brought some tackle to catch them. He said that once he came out there fishing, but didn't have much luck. He said two suckers was all he got. Then we talked of one thing and another,

and pretty soon Del said he was getting dry and we ought to cheer up a little. So he got the lump of ice out of the wagon with some of the stuff that was packed away in the straw, and some tall glasses, we had. Then he cracked some ice and it certainly sounded good in those glasses, and the general result was cold and effective, even if the taste wasn't all it should be. We all sampled it and the world improved right away, and went on improving as we continued the treatment, and Julius said that of all things he certainly did enjoy a picnic in the woods on such a day, with all the comforts of life.

"By and by, when we got hungry, we got out our chicken and things, and Julius opened his basket, which had some quite unusual sausages in it, the kind he said that his people provided for occasions of this kind. They were undoubtedly good, but pretty highly seasoned, the sort of thing to give a person a wonderful thirst. They were new to Del and me, and Julius generously let us have most of them, as he said he had plenty of those things at home. He enjoyed our chicken, he said, and by and by he got out a curiouslooking bottle of pinkish golden liquid which he told us came from Palestine and was what his people used at their ceremonial feasts. Del tasted it and so did I; then we gave up the material we had brought along for that ceremonial nectar which Julius said he had brought especially in our honor. It had a flavor that might have been

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distilled from fruits and flowers of ancient days, and when Julius declared that no amount of it could possibly hurt us we were amused that he should think such an assurance necessary. We used up his supply and then we all leaned back against trees, and I remember feeling that life had certainly showered blessings on me, and even riches, though I've never been able since to figure just how I calculated my opulence.

"Pretty soon Del began to talk about our town lots, how specially placed they were for the city's growth and how sure they were to make the fortune of any man who had them a year or two from that time. Julius said so, too-he even went further and said it might be within the next six months. He certainly was in as tractable and lovely a frame of mind as anyone could wish. Then he happened to speak of a little house he had recently bought in the middle of town-a little red-brick house that had spreading trees in the yard and a rose climbing over the front stoop, with a bit of lawn in front and a garden at the back. I don't know how it was, but there was something about the picture of that house, as Julius presented it, that took hold of one's imagination. He said it was rented to a young man and his wife and that their two little girls were nearly always playing under the trees when he went by, and that he was always willing to go quite a distance out of his way just to look at them.

"When Julius told us those things, while I leaned back against my tree and watched the bass jumping in the water, I had a feeling that I only needed an interest in that house to make me perfectly happy. Del must have felt that way, too, for pretty soon we were talking about the price of it, and the fact that there was quite a mortgage on it didn't seem to matter, for there was a mortgage on our lots, too, though considerably less in size. Julius didn't think at first he could part with that house at all, but we finally persuaded him to let us have it, mortgage and all, in exchange for our lots and our mortgage and a thousand dollars cash, which we agreed to pay him the next morning. Julius said we must further agree not to put his tenants out, as it meant so much to his happiness to walk around that way and see the little girls playing under the tree. So we promised that, too, and drew up a memorandum contract on some blanks, which Del happened to have in his pocket, and all signed them. Then by and by we drove home, and Del and I got rather quiet as the spell of that ceremonial nectar began to dissolve and we realized that we had a thousand dollars to pay in the morning and had only traded our mortgage for a bigger one. Still, of course, the place was rented; that was something, and our lots were quite unproductive.

"Well, I don't want to prolong this history. Del and I managed to borrow the thousand dollars we had to pay Julius, and closed the trade next

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morning. Then we went up to examine the little red house, which we had only seen casually before. It was all just as Julius said, but there was something about our feelings that was bad for the romance of yesterday. I hadn't eaten anything much that morning, and the sun or something gave my head a disagreeable sensation. Del looked pretty puny, too, and when we went inside and saw the general unrelated condition of things we did not feel any better. The woman said her husband was out selling silver polish and they hoped in a month or two more to be able to begin to pay some rent. The two little girls were having a discussion. One was pulling the other's hair.

"Del and I kept that house and paid interest on its mortgage about two years, and in that time got nearly enough rent out of it to paper the front room, which really needed it. Then we traded our title in it for a sway-backed horse, and an upright piano with a golden-oak case. We drew straws and I got the piano. I didn't need the piano, so I gave it to the new idiot asylum. They didn't want it, either, and traded it in on a phonograph. I have forgotten what Del did with the horse."

Hanky Dibbs looked into his glass of grape juice and puffed his cigarette slowly. Somebody asked:

"Did Julius profit by his lesson?"

Mr. Dibbs flicked the ashes from his cigarette solemnly.

"Oh yes, he profited by it, all right. Less than six months after we made that deal the Gould railroad system decided to build a belt-line around Hamville and they wanted that particular spot for their switches and things. Julius sold out to them, cash in hand, for about eleven times as much as the stuff cost him."

"And did Julius reform after you and Del got through with him?" asked another of the circle.

Hanky Dibbs finished the rest of his grape juice and set the empty glass down.

"No," he said, quietly, "but we did."

THOROUGHBREDS FOR THREE DAYS

WE had been through a good many fads in the office before we finally touched bottom at pugilism.

We began with Volapuk, I think, somewhere back in the remote 'eighties, and passed thence by gradual stages through easy lessons in Chinese to Browning and Wagnerian opera.

This completed our first intellectual epoch, so to speak, and was succeeded by a brief interlude of recreative pastime. Catalogues of bicycles, fishing goods, cribbage boards, and the like began to collect on Watson's desk, because Watson was systematic and always went deeply into the heart and literature of things.

Metaphysics came next, beginning with spiritualism, from which we drifted into hypnotism and Hindu magic. Watson was particularly enthusiastic in the latter, and induced Bently and me to invest seven dollars in a magic crystal ball, wherein he assured us, we could with slight practice behold at will all things absent or present, on top of earth or beneath it.

It was a beautiful and fascinating object to gaze upon, this ball, and we arranged it in a little darkened cabinet upstairs, where we could retire during moments of business inactivity and well-

nigh blind ourselves staring into its crystal heart.

It would seem a long jump from Buddhism to Pugilism, but we took it, suddenly and without premonition.

The direct cause of our disease came into the office one morning while the boys were taking off their cuffs and getting ready to discuss thought currents. He was a lithe, medium-sized man, rather seedily dressed. His coat was buttoned up to his neck, and a greasy cap was pulled down tight to his head. He looked warm from exertion, and asked for a drink of water.

Bently directed him to the hydrant in the rear, apologizing, as he did so because the ice had not come yet. Bently was always polite, and deserved a better fate than usually befell him.

The stranger protested that he did not want "iced water," and we now noticed that his accent was decidedly and broadly English; also that he wore bicycle shoes and carried something in each hand which looked like bits of gas pipe about three inches long.

Bently, judging from this, no doubt, remarked sotto voce as he passed out that he was a plumber in disguise.

I suggested that the things in his hands were little make-weights, and that he had impressed me as a foot racer.

Watson, who was older than the rest of us, and who, because of his cautious and suspicious nature,

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perhaps, had charge of the cash, intimated that he might be a professional cracksman in search of pointers.

The next morning, at the same hour, the stranger came again, and upon the same errand. This was too much for Bently, who accompanied him back to the hydrant and engaged him in conversation. They talked for some time in lowered tones, and after the stranger had gone Bently came back to us big with information.

The man was a pugilist, he said, from Australia. Had conquered everything hailing from the South Pacific except Fitzsimmons, and was now in America for that special and particular purpose.

He had dropped down into our quiet city for a month's rest and recreation before going into active training for the event, and went out every morning before breakfast for a little ten-mile run, merely as a constitutional, to keep his muscles firm and prevent his wind getting short. Incidentally his trainer, whom he had referred to as 'Arry, had arranged a quiet little mill with a local fighter from a neighboring town.

"The bout is to be for five hundred dollars and will be ended whenever our man sees fit to put the duffer from Arcadia to sleep," said Bently, excitedly. "It's like finding money in the road."

I noticed the pronoun "our" and became interested, even jealous of Bently, who had been the first to win the confidence of such a personage.

Watson observed that a book on the manly art could be had for one dollar of a certain publisher, whose name he had in his memorandum book and whose catalogue of boxing gloves he proposed to send for forthwith. Bently shouldered back to the hydrant with a tough air, and threw himself into a defensive attitude and ejaculated:

"I'm a turrow-bred, I am," just as the "old man" opened the door in from of him; whereupon he made a feeble attempt at an apology and returned to his desk, covered with confusion. Poor Bently. It was hard to believe that only two days before he had been discussing Eastern philosophy and seeking to probe the mystery of the sixth sense.

On the following morning we were looking for our pugilist for some time before he appeared. He explained, however, that he was a trifle late owing to a longer run than usual—a matter of twenty miles or so since daylight, he remarked carelessly. Then he requested the use of our telephone and called up 'Arry at the "'Untington 'Ouse to have me baath ready." His manner was royal, and I could see that even the suspicious Watson was impressed.

There was no question as to the fellow's suppleness and athletic carriage. I noticed this particularly as he walked back to the hydrant, motioning Bently to follow him. They conversed in undertones for fully ten minutes. Then the athlete went his swinging, catlike way, and Bently came

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back to us with an air of superiority that was irritating in the extreme.

"I'm a backer, I am," he said, with offensive Bowery intonation, and squared himself in front of Watson, who dodged and put up his cash book in self-defense.

"I'll let youse fellows in on de groun' floor if youse got any sand," he added, with condescension.

Watson went on making entries, while I looked at Bently with ill-concealed eagerness.

"What's the snap, Bent?" I said, at last,

flinging pride to the winds.

"Snap? It's simply finding money! Our man has got a chance to take a hundred dollars more of even money than he's able to cover. Nobody here knows who he is, and he doesn't want them to know, so he wont try to get the money himself for fear they'll get on to him and knock the whole fight in the head. He's taken a fancy to me and given me the first chance at the 'rake-off.' I told him I had only fifty, and he agreed to let the rest of the office in if I said so." And Bently waved his hand majestically, and waited for us to grasp the fullness and pomp of the situation. "Furthermore," he added, "we are to have reserved seats next to the ring as backers, and some authority as to the manner of conducting the fight."

Bently is a small man, but he swelled visibly as he made these statements. In the fullness of my

convictions I hastened to assure him that I would take twenty-five dollars of the remaining fifty, provided Watson would advance me five dollars on my week's salary.

Watson said that he would do that, also that he knew a place where we could get a book on the science and theory of chance. He did not offer to cover the remaining money, however, and admitted under cross-examination that he had never risked a dollar on a wager in his life and had conscientious scruples in the matter. We respected his scruples, and said we would take it ourselves if he would advance us twelve fifty each, besides the five dollars I had already arranged for.

For the remainder of the day our work suffered. Both Bently and I still owed payments on our bicycles, and we were happy now in the prospect of being shortly freed of these burdens. Bently was particularly elated, as he would come out with enough money to pay up on his wheel in full, and buy a dress suit, the need of which was old and sore.

"I think we ought to ask the 'old man' to give us a half holiday," he said. "I need a little relaxation, and I feel now as if I were able to afford it."

We got the half holiday the next morning, and we went up to the hotel to see our game chicken go through his paces. I must say that he performed beautifully, and hammered easily and unmercifully his trainer, a short, muscular, sullen-

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faced Irishman. Incidentally, we gave him our hundred, which he took carelessly and thrust into his pocket without even counting. It was a mere bagatelle, of course, to a man who was soon to be the champion heavyweight of the world.

Then we went back to the office and made it interesting for Watson, explaining to him carefully the points of superiority possessed by our fighter—his reach, quickness, swinging left-handers, even the three double teeth he had lost in a two-round fight in which he had conquered and disabled the Kangaroo Kid, of Sidney. We could see that Watson was restive almost to the verge of regret under this pressure, and we took turns in making it as entertaining for him as possible.

The next day was not a holiday, but it might as well have been so far as any work was concerned. Bently made an excuse early to get uptown, and when he returned informed us that, being in training, our man would take nothing but seltzer lemonade, though clearly Bently himself had been handicapped by no such restrictions. Watson flashed out from a little pile of pamphlets one treating upon the evils of intemperance, this being some twenty years before the perpetration of the Volstead Act.

On the morning following, which was the beginning of the fourth day of our degeneration, our pugilist for the first time failed to appear. Bently, who looked a trifle shaky himself, hoped that he had not fallen ill from over-training. Later he

induced Watson to let him do an errand for him at the bank. He was gone for some time, and when he returned I could not help noticing how old he had grown of late. I remember reflecting that he could not be as old as myself, and of wondering if I looked so worn and aged as Bently. I am sure now that I did—a few moments later.

Bently did not appear to be communicative, but, being more or less interested, I was prone to interview him.

"How's our man? Isn't sick, is he?"

"Oh, no, he isn't sick."

There was something about the intonation of this reply that made me cold inside. I looked searchingly at Bently, who was bending industriously over his work. Watson was marking a page in a little pamphlet on the gold cure, which he laid over on Bently's desk.

"Eh, ah—but, Bently," I said, endeavoring to frame an undefined terror, "it's all right, of course—the other man can't do him, can he?"

Then Bently, who has a sense of humor which often manifests itself even under the most adverse conditions, smiled a wan smile and whispered feebly:

"No, not until he catches him."

"You—you don't mean——" I gasped, and was silent.

Watson made a few soothing remarks and hunted out a small treatise he had at hand on the wiles of confidence men.

THOROUGHBREDS FOR THREE DAYS

Later in the day he read us a brief chapter on the fallacy of trying to get money without adequate return, and the reign of pugilism had closed.

Then we returned to our interrupted study of Hindu magic, and daily and diligently Bently and I used to gaze into the crystal ball, hoping to learn from its lambent depths that our pugilist had met, somehow and somewhere, with lingering violence.

That was all a good while ago. Watson has long since solved the secrets of the invisible, but to date Bently and I have had no returns.

AFTER which Chalmers lit a cigarette, and leaned back to puff at it more comfortably. "And that's the very last hurrying I'm ever going to do," he said, with decision. "I've finished that story and delivered the manuscript on time, but I had to hurry to do it, and I didn't eat right, and I didn't sleep right, and I've lost twenty pounds of flesh in the operation. Now I'm through. Hereafter when I undertake a job I mean to allow myself plenty of time and to spare. Hurry, hurry, hurry! I've been hurrying for thirty-five years. As a child I was hurried to get up, hurried to school, hurried home, and hurried to bed. As a man I've hurried still more—hurried to catch trains and cars, hurried to meals and appointments. I've dressed in a hurry, eaten in a hurry, worked in a hurry, and it's a wonder I didn't die in a hurry. Now I'm done. I've hurried for the last time."

He paused and puffed with deliberate luxury, breathing a liberal quantity of smoke and defiance. We had drifted into the club for luncheon, and a number of congenial spirits had gathered about our table to hear Chalmers talk. Chalmers is convincing when he talks. It is his enthusiasm, I suppose, and his New England conscience, which,

among other things, stands for absolute sincerity. Those who had gathered nodded approval. I would not like to say that the fact of Chalmers having a stunning sister, whose favor, though much to be desired, I was by no means sure of, did not influence somewhat the heartiness of my own indorsement. At all events, he addressed his next remarks to me.

"Bert," he continued, "I'm going to organize a new club. I'll commence right here, and you fellows can be charter members. There's a Don't Worry Club already, but this is better. It's a Don't Hurry Club. If you don't hurry you don't worry, and when people hear of my Don't Hurry Club they'll all want to join, and the Don't Worry Club will go out of business. Come, now, who wants to join? Don't all speak at once."

We all did speak, though perhaps I was a trifle in advance of the others. To a man we said it was a good thing, and just what the generation needed. We agreed that the world was moving too fast and that people were getting no real good out of life, because they did not take time to enjoy things as they went along.

"We must have a badge," suggested Dixon, who drew pictures and saw artistic possibilities ahead—"a badge with a tortoise on it."

Little Crosby dissented. He was an art editor, and his passion for "turning down" Dixon's suggestions was strong.

"Not a tortoise, but a snail. The tortoise has made a record for speed. The snail never has. A

snail by all means, or a delivery boy."

"I know a good motto," put in Merriton, who, like Chalmers, wrote things, but who was notoriously dilatory in his accomplishments. "I adopted it long ago. It's Latin. 'Lettum wate durnum'—isn't that good Latin, Tom?"

But Chalmers's early training asserted itself. "There's a line from the Bible," he said; "it's in Isaiah, and it covers the ground better than anything I know. 'He that believeth shall not make haste.' That's our motto, and the whole thing in a nutshell. It's faith that we must have a sure knowledge that it is unwise to hurry, and an unfaltering trust in the perfect result to follow. Instead of that we are told to 'step lively,' and we jostle and crowd like cattle. 'Step lively' has become the eleventh commandment, and stepping lively is the curse of the generation. I am going to break that Commandment and remove some of the curse. I'm going to begin now, and I want to know how many of you fellows will help me. How many of you fellows will refuse to 'step lively'? How many will pledge themselves not to hurry or be hurried for twenty-four hours? We'll make that the time of probation. If a man in this city can quit hurrying for twenty-four hours he can quit for good. To-morrow night we'll meet and report. I invite all who agree out to my house for the evening. There'll be something to smoke,

and other refreshments. How many of this five, besides myself, will be there?"

There was no dissenting voice. We all knew the hospitality of Tom Chalmers's country cottage, and the beauty and accomplishments of Tom Chalmers's sister. I was altogether disgusted at the eagerness with which little Crosby leaped at the opportunity. Only Merriton, the dilatory, asked:

"I suppose there need be no haste in getting there. Any time before next morning will do for a Don't Hurry Club?"

Chalmers regarded him severely.

"There is a difference between haste and promptness, Merriton. It is not the purpose of this club to encourage procrastination or careless indifference to one's duties. Its purpose is to develop forethought and deliberate action under all conditions. Promptness will be one of the first and best results."

Merriton's countenance became rather rueful.

"I thought I was going to be a star member," he said. "Now it begins to look like a dilemma with horns on it. I mustn't hurry to get there, but I must get there. I suppose there's no handicap on starting early, is there, Chalmers?"

"None. You may start now if you like. It takes thirty minutes to get there by train. By starting now I think that even you, Merriton, might manage to arrive by to-morrow night."

We rose, strong in the faith, and determined in

our resolve. I had the usual pile of letters on my desk, and a good many other things. It had been my custom to scrawl something that purported to be an answer to each of these, and so get rid of the mass by evening. Upon my return now I calmly took up one letter, calmly read it, then quietly answered it in full. I hadn't done such a thing before for years. I leaned back and approved of myself. Then very calmly I read and considered and answered another. Why, it was bliss. The Don't Hurry Club was to be the greatest boon of the century.

It is true that the pile of letters grew during the afternoon, and had grown still more the next morning. Like Longfellow's turnip, it grew and it grew. Still I did not falter, or at least not much, in my good work. "Bess"—that is to say, Miss Elizabeth Chalmers—usually approved of her brother's undertakings, and I wanted to be in fairly good standing when night came. I had seen none of the others since our agreement, but about four o'clock there came a line from Chalmers at the club.

Dear Bert: Come around here when you are through, and I'll take you out with me to dinner. I want to talk about ways and means before the others get there, and I want you to see how the plan works in my own household. Bess has fallen right in with the idea, and we feel that we've been emancipated. Last night there was an alarm of fire next door. Usually we should have dashed out half dressed, and altogether disreputable, to get in everybody's way and be of assist-

ance to nobody. As it was, I remembered and called out the line from Isaiah to Bess, after which we dressed calmly and completely, and went down as correctly as if we were going to an evening with Browning. It was a false alarm, but it shows what we can do, and as a fire-drill of the Don't Hurry Club was a success. Bess is enthusiastic, and we've developed a lot of new possibilities. Come, then, and be here by 5.10 sharp, so we can get the 5.28 train. That is, if you can do so without hurrying. Don't hurry! There are other trains and though Bess will likely have dinner on the table at six, she will understand if we don't get there. Of course promptness is always commendable, while haste never is. The way of promptness is the path to plenitude, while that of haste is the highway to hunger. That's the sort of thing I'm turning off now. Rather neat, don't you think so? Come, then, with promptness, perhaps, but without haste.

Deliberately,

CHALMERS.

I had not expected this, and it made my position somewhat difficult. I did not really hurry, perhaps, at least not in the old way, but a strict regard for the verities wrings from me the confession that during my last few moments in the office I did move about with considerable activity. Indeed, I felt quite like my former self when, at 5.05, I fell into the elevator, which landed me on the pavement just in time to connect with the club and Chalmers and the 5.28 and Elizabeth's six-o'clock dinner without missing a move at any point along the line.

"Did you ever see anything work more beauti-

fully?" Chalmers asked triumphantly, as we entered his cozy little cottage at Cloverdale, and found the dinner smoking hot on the table, with Elizabeth radiantly beautiful in the joy of our prompt arrival. "Not a step of hurry—just ordinary promptness and foresight. Allow yourself plenty of time, old man, always plenty of time, and then move with deliberation and calmness. When people try to hurry you, don't allow yourself to be disturbed."

I assented. I would have agreed to any statement made by Tom Chalmers while his sister sat just across the table, yet I could not help wondering vaguely whether matters would have been so perfectly adjusted if I had allowed Chalmers himself to wait long enough to miss the 5.28 train, the smoking-hot dinner, and radiant Elizabeth.

"Tom has made a new maxim," observed Miss Chalmers, "or an axiom, or something. It's about

promptness and plenitude-"

"And haste and hunger," I supplemented. "I have had already a taste of that alliterative wisdom, which accounts both for my being here on time, as well as for my good appetite for a hot dinner."

Chalmers regarded me severely.

"You didn't hurry, of course, after what I said in my note?"

"Oh no—that is, I couldn't, you know, after what you said. But one must move with a certain agility and vigor in order to be quite prompt, don't

you see? That was your idea, wasn't it, to be prompt?"

"Certainly. Promptness without haste. That

is the secret of happiness."

"So I gathered from your note. It is true that in my pursuit of promptness I dipped my mucilage brush in the ink, upset a card index, and pinched my fingers in closing the desk, but these were mere accidents. I have done the same things many times, with far less inducement."

A surreptitious glance convinced me that Miss Chalmers had not missed this delicate tribute, while her brother Tom, after regarding me rather solemnly for a moment, mounted his new hobby, which he proceeded to ride during what I now recall as a most delightful dinner.

Haste, he said, was against nature. Promptness was its very soul. The planets never hurried in their movements, yet they were always on time to the instant. The world, which in the beginning had made a revolution in twenty-four hours, did not, to keep pace with feverish humanity, revolve now in six, but in the same measured period that had been its inheritance from the ages. Seasons came and went as they had done through all time. The seeds sprouted no quicker, the fruit came no sooner to maturity. Within the earth precious minerals required ages to form. The gold nugget and the diamond crystal were not the product of a moment or a century, but of some vast eon of time. Even animal life, left undisturbed by man,

had gone on in the same old fashion that had characterized it in the Garden of Eden. It was preposterous that men alone should have inoculated their veins with a fever to lay waste, destroy, and at last annihilate. It was lack of faith, he declared, an utter and terrible lack of faith in the Great Universal Scheme, and he concluded by quoting once more the line from Isaiah, "He that believeth shall not make haste."

I feel that I have not presented the case as well as Chalmers did. Tom talks well, as I have suggested, and then his manner carries you along. Miss Chalmers and I listened and nodded assent, and altogether entered into the spirit of her brother's enthusiasm.

I confess that I should have done so whatever had been his doctrines. I was in that state of mind which indorses anything advanced or approved by the one fair she across the table, whose every look is rapture, whose every word is joy.

Yet I was anxious not to appear too eager, too clearly personal, in my indorsement of her brother's philosophies. I even raised a mild objection here and there, suggesting that, in order not to disturb the existing scheme of things—in the matter of catching trains, for instance—it became necessary at times to act with an expedition which might, by certain thoughtless persons, be misconstrued as haste.

But Chalmers would not concede a point. It was all wrong, he maintained. Two wrongs never

made a right, and in any scheme there was nothing worth preserving if it depended on haste. As for trains, he would show me, in the morning, something definite in that line, and how taking a suburban train might be made an æsthetic recreation instead of the disgraceful, nerve-destroying scramble it only too often became. There would be no sense of haste or anxiety anywhere. I should see.

In the parlor we held a sort of preliminary meeting. Crosby and Dixon had not arrived as yet, while Merriton, the dilatory and irresponsible, would come very late, of course, or, still more likely, not come at all.

We agreed that, for the present at least, the organizer of the new club should be its president; also that I would probably be acceptable as temporary vice-president, the office of secretary naturally falling to Elizabeth Chalmers.

Knowing that our headquarters were to be the Chalmers cottage, I suggested that, in the beginning at least, meetings of the officers should be held as frequently as possible, to which both secretary and president heartily agreed. Altogether the prospect was delightful, and we fell to discussing ways and means and possibilities with an ecstasy and extravagance that were the natural result of Chalmers's ample imagination, and my own mental fervency.

When the clock struck nine we suddenly remembered that Dixon and Crosby were still to come, with Merriton as a possibility. For my part, I

should have been glad to know they were not coming at all; but Chalmers was not quite in my condition, besides having a New England conscience, as I have said.

When the half hour struck he showed signs of

impatience.

"It's all right not to hurry," he said, "but they can't get here now before 10.30. I didn't expect anything better of Merriton, but Dixon and little Crosby, I thought, would at least be——"

There was a step on the piazza, followed by a

ring.

"They're here now," he added. "They've been loitering from the station. They haven't caught the true spirit of the movement. I shall recite to them my maxim about promptness and plenitude, and haste—"

The servant's voice was greeting some one in the hall. Then there was another voice and what seemed to us considerable delay. Then the door opened—rather hesitatingly, it seemed to us—to admit—Merriton.

Yes, it was Merriton. We felt sure of that, though I don't remember now by just what features we identified him. Not by his face, certainly, for that was streaked and bespattered beyond the line of semblance. Not by his clothes, for they were still further disfigured. There were large stains upon both knees. Deep rents began at the hem and extended upward. Dismantled pockets gaped and hung wretchedly, while mud

and the stains of mud possessed and dishonored the fragmentary remains. The attempt made outside to remove it had been well for the carpets, but

had been of no special benefit to Merriton.

I suspect that it was by his attitude that we knew him. That outline of humiliation and penitence we had seen before. Merriton meant well, but his good intentions had most frequently paved a pathway to remorse. As he stood there blinking in the full light of the parlor, we knew not whether to laugh or to commiserate him. Chalmers was first to find speech.

"Merriton," he said mournfully, "you've been

hurrying."

The figure in the doorway nodded miserably.

"I-I'm afraid I have a-a little," he said weakly. "You see, I-I wanted for once to be on time. So I started in good season and didn't hurry. I got to the station all right, just on timeworked like a charm. Then I took the train. There's where I first fell down-figuratively, of course, that time. It was the train that branches off at Oakwood. I saw people running, so I suppose the Cloverdale train must have been on ahead somewhere. I wouldn't run, of course, and I got on the car that stood there handy. When we passed Oakwood I waited and waited for them to call Cloverdale. I knew that it ought to be only a minute or two. When the fellow did call, it was John's Bay, and I was seven miles from this house. There was no way to get here by train before 10.30,

so I walked across country. I suppose I forgot myself sometimes and ran. I—I didn't mean to, but it's dark and cloudy, and twice I got off the road. Once I got into some brush on a side hill and fell into the brook at the bottom. I didn't seem to be able to get back up the hill through the blackberries, so I followed the brook quite a distance till I came to an open place. Then I had lost a good deal of time, and maybe I hurried a little to catch up. Brooks and brush, after a rain, are not very good for evening dress, so perhaps I'd better get back to town by the next train—"

He stopped, seeing that Chalmers was about to speak. For my own part, I had only pity and sympathy for the delinquent, while the face of Miss Chalmers was filled with forgiveness. Tom, however, regarded the matter somewhat differently.

"Merriton," he began, with dignified severity, "I regret exceedingly to see you before me in this plight. As president of the Don't Hurry Club, whose main object is that serene calm and deliberate attention to details, the result of which is perfect peace of mind and dignity of bearing, I am obliged to reprimand you before the members present. Merriton, you are—"

"Here," supplied the offender, in weak triumph.
"I'm here, and that seems to be more than the others are. I don't see Crosby and Dixon present."

There came a clang at the doorbell as he spoke. "You shall see them immediately," said

his voice. "As I was saying, Merriton, you are—"

But the door opened at that instant, and instead of Dixon and Crosby, the servant entered with two telegrams. Chalmers reached for them, and with an expedition hardly consistent with his office pulled off the covers. Then he read them aloud. The first was from Dixon.

CITY HOSPITAL, Ward 26.

Refused to step lively. Dragged two blocks. Laid up for ten days. Will sue company.

The other wire was from Crosby.

JEFFERSON MARKET JAIL, Cell 7.
Wouldn't step lively. Altercation and arrest. Trial
ten to-morrow. Want bail to-night.

No one spoke. Chalmers's eyes wandered from the telegrams to me, thence to his sister, finally resting on the pitiful object in the doorway. The sight of Merriton recalled his immediate duty.

"As I was saying, Merriton," he resumed sternly,

"you are a disgrace to the organization."

The victim of brook and brier nodded humbly.

"And I suppose you consider those fellows shining lights," he said.

"I do. They have the courage of their convictions, and are martyrs to a cause."

Beneath Merriton's splash and stain there flickered a smile.

"Yes, that's so," he said, "and I suppose it doesn't take courage and convictions to get in my

fix; but I know one thing, I'd rather be in jail than here."

Then the tension broke. Elizabeth Chalmers went forward and gave the unfortunate a welcome that was as cordial as conditions would permit, while her brother, relenting, suggested a change of raiment supplied from his own wardrobe and began immediate plans for the release of the noble but incarcerated Crosby.

Merriton said: "I can fix that, I think, if I can get back to town. I knew all those Jefferson Market people when I was on the *Shiner*, and they'll take me, if the bail isn't too big."

"You can get a train back to town in thirty minutes," rejoiced Chalmers. "Bob and I'll help you dress, so you won't need to hurry, and I'll take you to the train, so you can't miss it. Tell Crosby I'll be on hand at ten to-morrow sure, and you'd better call on poor old Dixon to-night, too, if you can."

We got Merriton into somethings with a promptness that, under the circumstances, could hardly be called undue haste. Then with Chalmers he disappeared into the night, and the vice-president and secretary of the Don't Hurry Club were left to continue its first meeting alone.

I cannot furnish a full report of this part of the meeting. If the secretary made any minutes of it, she has thus far failed to produce them. I knew that Chalmers would be back in twenty minutes, and there seemed a good deal to be done

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in the interval. Still, as I have said before, under the circumstances, I don't think there was undue haste—that is, not much. Indeed, fully ten minutes of the precious time had elapsed before the secretary was obliged to call my attention to the fact that I was vice-president of the new Don't Hurry Club. I may have been holding her hand at the time, or perhaps I took it just afterward.

"Yes, I know," I argued, "but I am not hurrying. I have known Tom for ages, and I feel as if I had known you as long. I have adored you ever since I first saw you more than a year ago. You

must have seen that."

"But we ought not to hurry, you know. We ought to——"

"Be prompt—yes, of course. That is what Tom says, and I agree with him."

"But we really should consult Tom first; and I ought to have time to think——"

My ear caught the sound of a step on the pavement—a quick, firm step like that of Tom Chalmers. My heart had completely forgotten that this was a meeting of the Don't Hurry Club, and that, like Dixon and Crosby, we were supposed to be two of its shining lights.

"Yes, oh yes, of course," I urged feverishly. "But, Miss Chalmers—I—oh, Elizabeth, Bess, Tom will be here in another second! Say yes, now—quick, that is, promptly, and let's do the thinking and consulting afterward!"

And then I don't remember just what did hap-

pen—there are no minutes—but when, a few seconds later, the president of the Don't Hurry Club arrived he found the secretary rather flushed from stirring a grate wherein there had been no fire for weeks, and the vice-president altogether triumphant over the club's first meeting.

"There are trains up to 9.38," said Chalmers, as we met in the breakfast room next morning. "We'll have to take an earlier one to get to Jefferson Market by ten. There's one at 8.39. We could get that without any difficulty, but it's a waytrain, while the next one at 8.50 is an express that gets there almost as soon, besides giving us eleven more minutes here. We mustn't fail to get that one, though. I wouldn't miss being at Jefferson Market at ten o'clock for considerable. I'm going to have something to say on this question of being made to step lively and rush and tumble through life. The Don't Hurry Club is going to get some free advertising. I was awake half the night preparing a little address to the court. It's a defense of Crosby, and incidentally a plea for more deliberate action-more complaisant lives.

"I keep my watch exactly with railway time," he added, "so that by starting right I need never hurry the least bit, but may walk along leisurely, listening to the birds and drinking in the real bloom and joy of suburban life. In fact, since we've begun the new regime my walk to the train has been a positive luxury, instead of the unhappy

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exhibition of former times. It is no longer a question of 'catching' or 'making' the train, but of calmly selecting the one desired, and of leisurely walking to meet it; then of boarding it without eagerness and without haste. It was so last night, when I walked over with Merriton. We had no time to waste, of course, but we did not hurry. I called Merriton's attention to the pleasures of deliberate promptness as we went along. He seemed a good deal impressed, and I hope will remember the difference between our quiet walk and his own disgraceful experience."

Chalmers spoke as if the new system had been in vogue for months. I did not have the heart to remind him that less than a week before he had been living and working and catching trains at the pace that kills. He seemed so very established, somehow, in his reformation. Elizabeth came in just then, more radiant than ever, in her fresh morning attire. She greeted me with a quick, firm hand pressure that was delightfully different from any former greeting, and that set my pulse a-going. Chalmers now consulted his watch.

"It's just 8," he said. "We will leave the house at precisely 8.40, which gives us ten minutes for the walk. In the old days I often covered it in five. I have done it in three. It was a spectacular performance."

"Are you sure of your watch?" I asked.

"Oh, Tom's watch is all right," laughed Eliza-

beth. "He compares it every day, and all the neighbors regulate theirs by his."

"It's a great thing to be sure of," Chalmers added. "One never need be uneasy then or disturbed. He that believeth in his watch doth not make haste."

We set out after a delightful breakfast and another thrilling hand pressure from Elizabeth, accompanied by a beaming look which Chalmers must have noticed had he not been so absorbed in the demonstration of his new system as applied to the matter of catching trains. It was 8.40, precisely, when we closed the gate.

The sweet spring air brought increasing satisfaction, and on my part an exhilaration that was but poorly restrained. With each step I became more eager for the moment when I should lay before Chalmers some new domestic possibilities in which he was more or less concerned. There is something about the rhythm and swing of a railroad train that makes a proper accompaniment to confidence, and I decided to begin my confession the moment we were in our seats.

There was a little rise of ground just ahead from which, in winter, when the trees were bare, Chalmers said, one could see the train for some distance. In the old days he had often run from this point to the station, after the train had been in sight, and had usually succeeded in catching it. He regretted now that wasted energy. He wondered how he had ever lived at such a tension.

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We made no haste. The country was at its best, and Chalmers paused once or twice to point out homes of people I knew or had heard of, and sites where others were about to build.

"You'll have to come out this way, Bert," he said. "A lot of your friends are out here, or planning to come."

It seemed an auspicious moment, and I was about to plunge into confidences forthwith. But we reached the rise of ground just then, and I saw Chalmers pause and hold up his hand, as if listening. I also paused, and then I realized that his practiced ear had caught the sound of a faint puffing over among the trees to our right.

"Wonderful how far we can hear that train on a still morning like this," he said. Then, consulting his watch, "It must be at Ringside now, nearly three miles away. I didn't know but we'd spent more time than we thought looking at those houses."

We walked on with restored confidence but I noticed that Chalmers did not point out any more houses, and perhaps unconsciously quickened his step. Then, as the puffing among the trees grew ominously louder, he once more consulted his watch, and there was another definite increase of speed, until presently we were moving at a pace not wholly consistent with Chalmers's faith in his timepiece or with our offices of president and vice-president of the Don't Hurry Club.

"Do you suppose the hands of that infer-

nal watch could have caught in the night?" he demanded, presently, with great annoyance. "We've got to move up, Bert. That train's our last chance and it's nearer than I thought."

I was on the point of quoting the text from Isaiah, but resisted the impulse. It did not seem

altogether wise in view of the situation.

"Perhaps the train's ahead of time," I suggested.
"No, they're never ahead. It must be this atch—" But at that moment there came a

watch——" But at that moment there came a white puff of smoke from among the trees ahead, and we broke into a run without further ado.

Now, I know something about running myself, and once held the school record for a three-hundred-yard dash. But not being a suburban resident like Chalmers, with the advantage of continuous training, I was not in perfect form. Still, I held my own fairly well, until suddenly from the trees ahead there came a brisk, mellow whistle.

At that Chalmers leaped forward and passed me as if I had been walking. He leaped square into a large pool of water, the result of recent showers, and the turbid fluid splashed in every direction. A good deal of it went on my trousers, and a still larger quantity on Chalmers himself, extending upward as high as his tie and collar.

He was not dismayed. The train had left the trees and was pulling into the station. It would rest there for a brief impatient instant, and then away. We must make it—there was no alternative. I did not pause to hear the birds sing.

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With a mighty bounding effort I regained my lost ground, and was neck and neck with Chalmers, splashing down the soft street that led to the station. It was a race worth watching, and I regret that some of the old class were not there to see me "do up" Tom Chalmers and lower the record. Still, we were not without appreciation. From the little shops on both sides of the way the butcher and baker, with their clerks and delivery boys, tumbled out to cheer and to encourage us to yet further effort. Chalmers running alone they had seen and applauded before, but to see two semiprofessional sprinters racing neck and neck against time was unusual, even for Cloverdale.

When the train began to move we were still a short block away, and on the side opposite the platform. The train handles were high from the ground, and the footing beneath looked poor.

"We-we'll never make it," I panted. "Let's

take-next train and-telegraph."

If any struggle took place then between that New England conscience of Tom Chalmers and temptation, it was instantaneous, and the former triumphed.

"Can't!" he panted back. "Crosby - ten

o'clock-must."

Then did we accomplish the impossible. Although at the utter end of our strength, we actually increased our speed for the few remaining yards, each caught a pair of handles as they swung by on a level with our chins, and at the risk of life

and limb dragged ourselves up to soiled, crumpled

exhaustion, but to safety and triumph.

We had neither strength nor breath for speech, at first, nor to totter inside. When we did, the conductor was just coming through. He knew Chalmers, and paused to look us over. We were worth looking over.

"Why," he commented, "what did you do that for? Why didn't you wait for the next train?"

"Couldn't-important business-ten o'clock!"

gasped Chalmers.

"But you'd have made that all right on the 8.50 express."

Chalmers gaped up at him.

"Isn't this—the 8.50?"

"Oh no! This is the 8.39. Five minutes behind time this morning."

I did not make my confidences to the rhythm and swing of the train as I had intended. The time did not seem auspicious.

Neither did Chalmers make the address he had lain awake to prepare. He did address the court, however, and had some good things to say about the rights of citizens, the duties of corporations, and the arbitrary discourtesy of their employees. What he said was true and forcible, but it was not a free advertisement for the Don't Hurry Club. In the end little Crosby paid his fine and Dixon paid his bill at the hospital. Chalmers generously offered to make good their losses, on the ground

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that they had been incurred through his well-intentioned but somewhat misdirected zeal.

Not that the Don't Hurry Club went immediately out of business. Chalmers would never have consented to that, but the membership pledge was somewhat modified.

For instance, we all went to Cloverdale again somewhat later, and there were no injunctions issued against "stepping lively." Indeed, we were ordered by the secretary to step lively as need be to arrive in season.

As before, I was a favored guest; also Merriton-the dilatory and irresponsible Merriton.

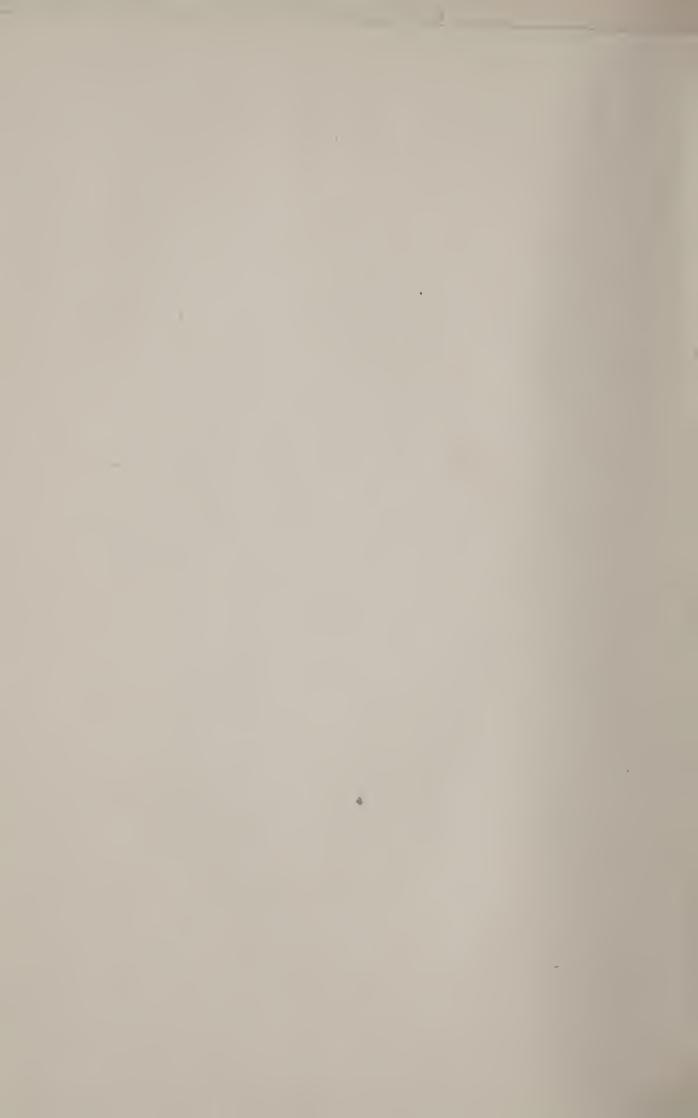
He went with me, as best man.

I KNEW I was going to be a landlord when our own landlord raised the rent. I said there were clearly two sides to this rent question, and the way to break even was to be on both of them. We would buy something tempting—tempting to a tenant—furbish it up a little to make it still more seductive, establish relations with the first desirable applicant, and forget care. When the annual boost came around we would pass it along to our tenant, without a murmur. It seemed the simplest thing in the world—we wondered why everybody hadn't thought of it. Of course it would require a bit of capital to start with—perhaps that fact had deterred some. Fortunately, we had our little bunch of savings in fluid form—in a savings-bank, I mean, where they could be drawn at any time. We would only have to make a first installment and pay for the trifles of paint and paper. The rent would easily take care of future payments and interest. You see yourself it was a fine idea. Elizabeth and I could hardly sleep for discussing it.

Any doubts we may have had vanished when I consulted our real estate man. He was enthusiastic over it. He said it solved the whole problem. It was one of those big revolutionary ideas, he said—so simple that nobody had thought of it.



IT WAS A PRETTY LITTLE BUNGALOW AFFAIR



It had come along at a psychological moment, too. Houses were renting like hot cakes, and he happened to have one for sale that was the very thing—handy to the station—small payment down—neat as a button. His car was at the door; he would take us to see the bargain.

It did seem like one. It was a pretty little bungalow affair, facing a sort of park, and it had handy-looking improvements, including a furnace that was set in a kind of subcellar—the agent said to more efficiently conserve and co-equalize the heat units, which I hope the reader will understand better than we did. I did not notice any way to drain the little pit, but the agent said that, being at the foot of a hill, as it was, the geodetic subseepage took care of everything. He was a man of diction, I will say that. He added that there were several parties considering the premises.

That last remark did the trick. We ascertained that our balance at the savings bank would provide for the first payment, with a slender margin for setting said premises in order, and closed forthwith. Never mind the details of the transfer. I recall that there was something they called searching the title—something expensive that gnawed deeply into our reserve margin; also formalities connected with the insurance, requiring more of the reserve, and a rather hectic afternoon when we assembled in the agent's back office to "take title" from a grim and muscular woman and a diffident little man who appeared in the title deeds as the

"grantors," though it required only one guess to tell who was the grantor in fact, the little gentleman being mere detail. He seemed always about to jump behind her skirts, and dodged perceptibly when once or twice she turned on him quite suddenly. He attached his signature with what might be termed trepidation. It is hardly necessary to say who took the check.

Our agent was right about one thing: houses were renting like hot cakes, if one may imagine that hot cakes are ever disposed of in that way. We selected from several applicants an appealing young couple who referred to our little property as a nest and a haven, and were unencumbered as to family. Also the young man looked as if he could pay the rent, and Elizabeth liked the way the pretty young wife did her hair.

It was, however, an expensive coiffure. It dazzled Elizabeth into promising a lot of things in the way of paint and paper that wiped out the remnant of our reserve and left a very sizable balance due our decorator. It is quite amazing what such things cost, once you get started. It would require a good six months' rent to put us on a dividend basis. We consoled ourselves with the thought that the little house certainly did look attractive and would probably require nothing more for years.

The latter idea was not well founded. At the beginning of the second week, I think it was (I know it rained over Sunday), the telephone in-

formed me (young Mrs. Lincoln's voice was remarkably winning) that the front gutter-the thing that catches the water from the roof—was stopped up, or something, and had overflowed like everything and made an awful mess on their clean windows, and didn't I think something should be done about it. I admitted that something should. I even thanked her for letting me know, and passed the hint along to our "Tinner and General Repairs" man down the block, though I hung up the receiver with a sinking sensation, remembering that his newly adopted wage schedule was \$1.25 per hour and that jobs are long and time is fleeting. It was not until the next evening that Mrs. Lincoln called me to say, with real concern, that there must be a leak in the roof, as quite a spot had come through on her nice, new, cream-colored ceiling.

This was indeed glad news. To find a leak in a roof requires genius and leisure. I knew a man once who looked for thirty years for a leak in his roof and had not located it at last accounts. I assured the perturbed Mrs. Lincoln that it was too bad; that the matter should at once be attended to, and that very likely the spot would disappear when dry, though something told me that it never would. She said the "Tinner and General Repairs" had been there most of the day and seemed to have the gutter fixed. I promised to have him back next morning, prospecting for the leak, and bade her a pleasant good night, after which I broke the news to Elizabeth, who spoke a few bitter femi-

nine words to the effect that she didn't see why we should do all those things when our own landlord was so perfectly impossible whenever we asked him to do even the smallest thing; and I thought I could see that her admiration for pretty Mrs. Lincoln was losing its edge in the thought of our prospective dividends going to enrich "Tinner and General Repairs."

It did not take the latter thirty years to find our leak. He was only about three days at it, but his bill, added to that for re-doing the cream-colored ceiling, made a month's rent look like thirty cents—thirty-five, to be exact. We were, however, not entirely disheartened. Such things always had to be attended to when a house had been empty, we said, and very likely now we had reached the end of them.

Such, indeed, seemed to be the case. Several weeks, even a month, went by without further report from Mrs. Lincoln (though for a time I confess that I dreaded the sound of the telephone bell), and we were lulled into a sense of security that became almost elation when still another month passed and left our dividends intact.

But then something quite fresh developed. It was getting coolish weather, and one brisk morning the voice with the smile called up to say that they had built a fire in the pretty little fireplace and that it smoked awfully—that they really couldn't stay in the room.

Long ago I had an experience with a smoky

chimney—a sad and costly experience—one that should have taught me always to try a chimney before buying a house. I reflected on this as I hung up the receiver, after assuring the sufferer at the other end—quite cheerfully, not to say gayly—that I would be right over, while in my mind was growing a ghastly picture of a chimney being taken down, piece by piece, with pretty Mrs. Lincoln wringing her hands and wailing through her littered house.

It was not so bad as that. That old experience had taught me something—strange as it may seem. I had not noticed it before, but I saw now that the pretty fireplace was constructed for appearance rather than for utility. It was a tall fireplace. Smoke starting upward for the chimney opening had to be carefully trained in order not to spill out into the room before it arrived there. When Mrs. Lincoln and I covered the upper heights with a slab of cardboard it did well enough. I said I would have "Tinner and Repairs" produce a hood that would help smoke to steer in the right direction. I did that, and the bill was fourteen dollars. I was so glad that it had not been necessary to take down the chimney that the amount seemed small. Mrs. Lincoln was also happy. passed.

It seemed now that nothing else could happen. We had been through hot weather, rainy weather, and cold weather. Being a landlord had not been an entirely blissful experience, but, on the whole,

we had learned a good deal that would be worth something in future. Besides, the worst was certainly over.

A reasonable assumption, but not warranted. It rained that spring—not a little, but a great deal. It rained and it rained—night after night, day after day, week after week. In the words of Daudet, "Il plut, il plut, mon Dieu, comme il plut," which is more polite than English and means the same thing. Looking out on the swimming world morning after morning, I had a premonition of impending disaster.

If ever a premonition was a straight tip, that one was. The telephone got me out of bed one morning to bring the joyful tidings. It was not the voice with a smile this time. It was young Mr. Lincoln who was talking, and his voice was tinged with acrimony. The trouble was in the little subcellar where the furnace stood. The geodetic subseepage had not been able to keep up with floods, or there was a hitch somewhere in its operations. The voice said that the water was coming fast. If it kept on coming the way it had started it would get up into the furnace high enough to put out the fire. I had better come over and have a look at it.

I did not know what I could do by having a look at it, but I went. I did not wait for breakfast—the case seemed urgent. I found the young man standing on the lower steps that led down into the pit of sorrows, bailing heavily, handing up pails of

water to young Mrs. Lincoln, whose coiffure was not at its best. I relieved her and we reduced the freshet, but it was only a stay of execution. At one corner a small steady stream was trickling in, and in a little time the deadly level would be creeping up again, as relentless as fate. The young man said they had returned from the theater the night before, and that, going down to stoke the furnace before retiring, he had found the water several inches deep. He had been in his dress suit, he said, but had postponed other matters to bail out. He remarked that he did not enjoy bailing out a cellar at one o'clock in the morning with his evening clothes on. He spoke with considerable feeling. I could see that he would be fussy about such things. He went on to say that this morning the water was still higher and that as soon as he had telephoned me he had gone at it again. I gathered that he did not regard the job as a part of the obligation assumed with his lease. I did not attempt to debate this point. I felt that my position was not strong. I said I would see "Tinner and General Repairs" at once and find out what could be done. I thought he might provide a man and pump for immediate needs, and suggest some more conclusive remedy. No doubt the trouble was temporary—almost evanescent, so to speak—that as soon as the unprecedented deluge ceased it would end.

"Tinner and Repairs" did not send a man. It was that period of the war when men were scarcest

and he did not have one. He did erect a pump, after an interval of days, during which I personally bailed, with slight assistance and heavy profanity three times per diem to keep that deadly inflow below the fire-line. I know now what it is to be on a sinking ship. I manned the pump, too, when it arrived, but it was not a complete success. Neither did the trouble cease with the rain. fact, the persistent trickle had become a steady and forceful spray, quite clear and cold, resembling a spring. "Tinner and Repairs" said he believed it was a spring that had broken through and would now run steadily, the year around. He advised taking out the furnace and turning the little subcellar into a well. That remark will cost him dear. I shall never engage him again—if I can help it.

Let us not prolong these bitter memories. It became clear, presently, that we could not stem the rising flood. Our tenants decided to pay a visit to relatives until it abated or until some happy genius could provide means of relief. Their lease would be out in another month, anyway, they said, and of course, under the circumstances, we could hardly expect, etc., etc. Which of course we couldn't, and were only too happy to be left with our desolation. I never pumped again. A day later most of the furnace had disappeared. The subcellar had become a well in fact.

I told the real-estate man that we had decided to sell. I did not wholly blame him, I said, for not knowing that a clear, cold spring was there

ready to break through, and I thought many persons might consider a spring an advantage, but that we did not wish to bother with remodeling the heating-plant and would ask no advance on the purchase price. He was very cheerful. He said that a good many people were looking for houses and he would get rid of ours in no time. I don't know exactly what his idea of "no time" was, but a month went by, and our former tenants moved out their things, and there was still no one to take their place.

Then one rare May morning a young man called at our apartment. He was a dreamy-looking person with abnormally thin hair, and he said he had heard we had a house to sell. I did not ask him how he had heard it—it did not matter. He went on to say that he was an inventor and wanted a quiet place in the suburbs where he could perfect his thoughts and construct his own models. He told me of some of his inventions, which ranged all the way from a coal scuttle on wheels to a folding drawbridge. Many of them seem to be attachments to automobiles—one of these being a carburetor that would work with kerosene, wood alcohol, and several other fluids-I think he said lemon extract, hair-restorer, and certain of the patent medicines. It was doing wonders when he tried some new fluid on it-furniture polish, perhaps-whereupon it unaccountably blew up and scattered his testing car over quite an area—he hadn't found all of it yet. His hair was slowly

coming in again, he said, but he feared it would never be as thick as before. He declared he could invent anything—all he asked was a chance. Could he see the house?

I assured him that he could, and we were presently on the way. I was not hopeful, but as we walked along I spoke of the beauty of the location, the outlook on the park, the handiness to trains. I tried to lead up to mentioning the newly developed spring, but we were there before I could manage it.

He took only a glance at the upper areas of the place. He wanted to see the basement, he said, to inspect its possibilities as a shop. I led him to it silently. I had a feeling that the end was near. He took a casual look and seemed to approve of the size and window arrangement. Then his eye caught the square of deadly dark water, the upper works of the furnace just showing above it. He approached and gazed down upon it—as it seemed, eagerly.

"Ah," he said, "what have we here?"

I had thought of a good many things to say, but, being bred in righteousness, I decided that I could not materially improve on the truth. I told him most of what had happened—the heavy rains, the breaking through of the water, the bailing, the pump (still standing), the belief by some that we had acquired a spring that might be utilized, if one cared for a spring in the middle of his cellar. I added that I did not take much stock in the

spring idea, that I thought it was just water from the sponge of a hill behind us. Many other cellars in the neighborhood had water in them and were as poorly provided with drainage. I said it hopelessly and was not encouraged when he remarked, thoughtfully, "Ah, indeed, quite so, quite so—let us be going now."

He asked me when the next train left and hurried to catch it. He would let me know his decision quite soon. I thought I knew it already, but politely refrained from saying so. I had completely forgotten him when, next morning, his rather thin voice informed me by telephone that he would take the property and asked that the papers be drawn without delay. I did not believe it, of course—I thought he had lost his mind—but Elizabeth insisted that I attend to the papers. Something told her, she said, that it was all right. Elizabeth is strong on intuition. I wanted to say that it was too bad that something had not told her to avoid that house in the first place; but I counted five and changed my remark.

All the same, Elizabeth's "something" told her correctly, this time. That afternoon, Mr. Willoughby Wood—such being our inventor's euphonious name—appeared with a certified check for the payment down, and our house of sorrows speedily became his. He seemed as gleeful as if he had really bought something valuable, and declared he couldn't get established in that grand basement quick enough. He had a great idea, he said, some-

thing that would be a real boon to mankind. He seemed a gentle, trusting soul. I could not help feeling sorry for him.

I have misplaced a good deal of sympathy in my time, but I never made a worse mistake than I did with that man. One day about six weeks later he called me up and asked if I wouldn't walk over that way pretty soon, as he had something to show me. I thought he had found some new defect in the premises and was going to throw them back on our hands. I made up my mind that I would travel through the highest courts before I would take that place again. I walked slowly, grimly petrifying this resolve. He met me at the door, beaming. I noticed at once that his hair was less scanty. His wife and two offspring stood about and beamed also. He wasted no words on preliminaries, but beckoned me to the basement. As he opened the door I heard a curious sound-it was between a cough and a sneeze and a wet whistle. He conducted me straight to the little subcellar. I looked down. There was no longer any water in it—the floor seemed quite dry —the furnace was freshly blackened, even gilded. I remarked these things incidentally. What really held my eye was a curious little combination of wheels and levers and pipes that was making strange motions to a variety of intermittent noises and apparently having a good time in its way.

"There it is," said Mr. Wood. "Greatest invention of the age. A boon to suffering humanity and

a fortune for the inventor. The Willoughby automatic hydropathic ejector—cellars and mines kept dry at minimum cost—no trouble to run. Every man on the block must have one and millions more throughout this great land. Manufacturing company already organized, and work on plant begins next week. Sir, you put fame and fortune into my hands when you sold me this house. I am grateful, sir, and if you ever again need an ejector I will put you in a Willoughby at factory rates."

I congratulated and thanked him and came away with mixed feelings. But they became a good deal more mixed when I read this morning a certain announcement in the financial section of the *Times*. You also may have seen it—the notice that the Willoughby Ejector Company, after six months of highly successful operation, has increased its capital to three millions, and that a limited amount of the new stock is to be offered. I have just mentioned the matter to Elizabeth and she has another intuition. Something tells her, she says, that if ever we want to get even on our investment we'd better subscribe for some of that stock.

THE MEANNESS OF PINCHETT

IT is my opinion that James Pinchett in early life decided to die a mean man. It is my further opinion that he will succeed in doing it. Those who know him best—his old college class—are offering seven to one on it, with no takers. I have never known a man to make a more distinguished success in any chosen line of conduct, to follow it more consistently or to be more favored by circumstance. This is not bitterness. I am well known for my fairness and calm, dispassionate statements. What follows is mere history. I may even try to soften it, in spots.

My first memory of Pinchett has a cheerful background. He appeared in the little bunch of students that in the early weeks of our first year used to gather in a cozy back room, not such a weary distance from the campus, to smoke and relax and discuss the important problems of life, after the hard application of the day.

We smoked pipes, mostly, and kept our tobacco in a community box into which any one emptied a sack when he felt like it and had the change to spare. Pinchett had the spare change—he was the richest one in the class—but he never felt like it. We had annexed a round table and used to get down the box and set it in the middle of it and help



YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT HIS NECK WAS AT STAKE



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ourselves. That was where Jim Pinchett was strong—on helping himself. He had a big pipe and it was going steadily. His hand was in the box about half of the time. Nobody had invited him to sit at our table; he selected it himself, by a sort of inspiration. At first we were too polite to crush him; later our position did not warrant it. You are beginning to get the measure of Pinchett.

We had other refreshments, at times—a bite to eat and something to wash it down with. Did Pinchett enjoy these things? Believe me, he did! Did he chip into the pot to help pay for them? Jamais de la vie! which means that he didn't—I am averse to writing slang in English, just as I am opposed to reading certain tales in that chaste and polite tongue.

Why did we submit to Pinchett? I will tell you. He had a genius for mathematics. He was a fiend for equations—geodetic lines were as A B C to him. When I add that he was vain of this gift and inordinately fond of giving advice you will begin to understand. The rest of us were, so to speak, shy on mathematics. Pinchett could be counted on in time of need for a little private assistance. That's why we suffered him. That's why we allowed him to smoke our tobacco. That's why we permitted him to eat our hot dogs and drink our ginger-beer without smiting him hip and thigh and flinging him into the outer desolation. He knew it, too, banked on it, capitalized our need.

Once when the tobacco box was empty I proposed that we play some kind of a game to see who should fill it, and for a round of hot dogs. Pinchett was weak on games, and I winked at the others to intimate that this time we would lash him to the mast. He protested, of course. He said that it was gambling and that he had been brought up to abhor all games of chance.

For once we did not let him go. We rode him down, browbeat him, shamed him till he came in. You never saw a man suffer as he did while the game was going on. Beads of sweat stood on his brow. You'd have thought his neck was at stake and the hangman waiting. He was so scared that he forgot what little he knew and never by any chance played his hand properly.

He didn't need to, however. Of all the fool luck you ever heard of, Pinchett had it. He swept the table. I paid for the tobacco and dogs myself, while Jim Pinchett whooped and carried on in a way to make a person sick. Perhaps you will believe, now, what I said about his early ambition to die a mean man.

But I did not start out to write James Pinchett's life. I have only tried to show you what he was like in those early days, and I am going to tell you now his latest chapter, so you can see how his youthful purpose holds.

Pinchett has always been faithful to the class—I will say that. I don't know how he ever brought himself to the point of paying his way into the

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college club; that must have been a heart-breaker. I know he went to live just far enough out of town to bring him into the nonresident list, which saves half the dues, and that he never by any chance misses Saturday night when there is a free smoker, with something to eat afterward—jamais de la vie, as I remarked once before. Neither does he ever fail to be on hand when something is ordered, like cigars or refreshments. Pinchett has developed a perfectly abnormal instinct in knowing the exact psychological moment to appear, likewise to disappear when everybody else has bought and it is about to be his turn.

He has stuck with the old round-table crowd all these years, and because of sentiment, or habit, has been permitted to consume our substance, though he is no longer any use to us, but just a clacking nuisance and dead expense, so to speak. We have been severe with him at times, chilly, sarcastic, even denunciatory, but without result. There came a day at last when we planned to give him a lesson—a positive, costly lesson—something he would remember. The plot, however, was not followed up, and we had about abandoned the idea when there arrived what seemed a special providence in the way of opportunity.

Some months before, Hannerly, one of the best fellows in the old class, died. Hannerly, in fact, had been too good a fellow for his estate. He had always made money, but not much of it had clung to his bank account, and his widow had found her-

self with very little beyond some expensive jewelry which Hannerly had acquired in prosperous moments. We did not like the blank that Hannerly's going had left at our club table and said we would do something for his widow. Among other things she had a very handsome solitaire diamond ring to dispose of—a ring that had cost six hundred dollars, but would have to go at a sacrifice if sold in the regular way. We said we would help her get something fancy out of the solitaire—that a raffle was the thing.

The club does not permit raffles, so we left the number list and the tickets just down the block at the Earlmore Hotel, where Hannerly had been a good customer, and conducted delegations down there to buy them. The tickets were priced on a sliding scale, ranging from \$6, through \$5.99, \$5.98 down to the lowest, which was one cent. You reached into a box and drew out an envelope containing a numbered card and paid what the figure on it called for. It was an attractive scheme and would net Hannerly's widow \$1,803. If you don't believe it, count it for yourself. It will take you only about four hours, and it will be a great satisfaction to prove me wrong.

The plan was partly mine and I worked hard for it. Almost every time I engineered a crowd of fellows down to the Earlmore I took a chance or two myself and managed to pick out the \$6 ticket and the \$5.98 and several other sizable numbers, about sixty dollars' worth in all. Some of the

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other boys did about as well. Finally we got hold of Pinchett and took him almost by force to the Earlmore, where we explained the beauties of our plan.

You never saw a man act as he did. He said he had never taken a chance in a lottery and never would—that it was against his principles—that he was sorry to see us engaged in a conspiracy that, whether it succeeded or failed, would be a blot on Hannerly's memory. Never would he be a party to it. If Mrs. Hannerly was really in need, dire need, then he might consider some reputable method of assistance. Anyway, it was Hannerly's own fault that—

Then we sternly and firmly took him by the arm and marched him up to the box of envelopes and the list, and said, with set teeth, "Now you take one of those tickets and pay for it, without further comment." He did it then, for he saw we were deeply in earnest. The number he drew was \$1.39, and he paid that pitiful sum with bitter words, almost with tears. He didn't mind spending money, he said, but to throw it away in a thimble-rig game like that was a little too much.

The last tickets were sold by Friday and we arranged that the drawing was to take place at the Earlmore the next evening. It was to be conducted by the hotel manager and two clerks, none of whom had been permitted to buy a ticket. No club member was even to be present; the winner would be notified by telephone. Thus did we

arrange it, in order that, while all was as fair as the day, we might still put one over on Jim Pinchett.

We knew he would be on hand—wild horses could not keep him away. His one miserable chance in six hundred to get something for next to nothing would have raised him from his deathbed. Early in the evening, on the way down to the club, I said to the boy in the news-stand at the Earlmore:

"Tommy, about an hour from now, say at seven-thirty, call up Mr. James Pinchett at the College Club and tell him that his number, one-thirty-nine, has drawn the Hannerly ring. You are not to elaborate, or tell who you are. Simply say: 'Mr. Pinchett, I am speaking from the Earlmore. Your number, one-thirty-nine, has drawn the Hannerly ring.' Better step outside to do it—just a little fun among ourselves, you understand—and here's a dollar—don't forget."

I knew he wouldn't, for Tommy is one of the brightest.

Most of the old crowd were already at the club, and had assembled at our round table in the alcove, Pinchett among them. They made room for me and we had something in the way of refreshments. Pinchett for once was cordially invited to join. Clarence Barnes even slapped him on the shoulder.

"I shouldn't wonder at all, Jim," he said, "if you drew the Hannerly ring. That number of yours is a regular winner—has a thirteen in it and

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adds up thirteen—you can't beat it. You ought to order us all a good dinner now, on the strength of it."

But Pinchett said, glumly, "A fine prospect—one chance in six hundred, with a double thirteen for a hoodoo."

"Don't you believe it, Jim; thirteens are always lucky." Barnes turned to the rest of us. "I say, boys," he added, "if any one at this table gets the ring he pays for a good dinner for the gang—is that a go?"

Everybody assented—everybody except Pinchett, who hesitated.

"What's the matter, Jim? You're not going to miss a good thing like that, are you? You've got only one chance in six hundred of having to pay for the dinner, and if you do pay you'll be winner about five hundred to one on the ring. You're in on a sure-thing gamble like that, aren't you?"

Pinchett's face wore a look of painful anxiety which became resignation.

"I suppose so," he said. "You fellows are always trying to work something to make a man spend money."

"That's so, Jim. We always were a bad lot, weren't we? But you were mighty good about squaring the circle for us in the old days, and that's why we stand by you now. Here, boy, bring some cigars. What kind do you like, Jim? Have a good one."

Pinchett mellowed under this attention. He smoked and talked genially of the old days. He grew more expansive and patronized us. He thought perhaps we had done well enough, considering. Now and then I stole a glance at the time. The hour of his doom approached.

It was just seven-thirty by the club clock when

one of the waiters came to our table.

"A call at the telephone for Mr. Pinchett," he said.

Pinchett rose rather hastily. The rest of us looked at one another with deep meaning; it was probably the call from Tommy.

It was, in fact. Half a minute later Pinchett came plunging back, waving his arms and fairly

beside himself.

"I've won it! I've won it!" he whooped quite hysterically. "That hundred and thirty-nine was all right, Clarence, just as you said. A six-hundred-dollar ring for a dollar thirty-nine! I tell you, boys, it pays to be lucky—I tell you—"

We deluged him with congratulations—heaped and piled them upon him. If he'd had any sense at all he would have smelled something wrong in our absurd demonstrations. But he swallowed everything—how we had always loved him; how tenderly we always felt, remembering the old days; how happy his good fortune made us. Members from other tables, seeing the commotion, came over and congratulated him. I really felt sorry for Pinchett, knowing what a rude and horrible

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awakening was to follow. It was truly pitiful. Presently he quieted down.

"Now for that good dinner, Jim—best the club can afford, eh?"

Pinchett face fell. He had forgotten that part of the bond.

"Oh, say, extras weren't in it," he objected; "just the regular things, you know—the table d'hôte. I didn't mean—"

But we rode him down, drowned him out, browbeat him into submission, as we had done so long ago. It was really a very good dinner he gave us, with popping corks and perfectos, and just about the end of it we called on him for a speech. He made one in which he told us how glad he was to know that we still remembered and appreciated the little he had tried to do for us in the old days; how, after all, Hannerly had not done so badly in spending his money for trinkets, as it had given us a chance to do something for his widow, and how he had been only too glad to do his part.

He was about to enlarge on this point when a waiter again appeared to summon him to the telephone. We were thankful for the interruption, but we hoped the call was nothing that would take Pinchett away from the club. The drawing was about due, and if Jim wasn't there our joke would be just about wasted. We wanted to see him floored by the official news; to see him writhe and grow old; to watch his hair turn gray while we poured out extravagant sympathy and crocodile

tears. Thus would we wipe out a little of the old score.

He was not called away. He was back again in quite a brief time—his face wearing a rather puzzled, thoughtful look.

"Do you know," he said, as he came up, "that's rather queer. That was the manager of the Earlsmore who just called up. He told me again about my winning the ring, and I understood him to say the drawing had just 'taken place.' Curious, isn't it?"

Of those gathered around that table there wasn't a soul who could utter a syllable.

"Curious," repeated James Pinchett, "but the main thing is I've won it."

And he had.

AN EXCURSION IN MEMORY

I HAVE a memory like a time-lock safe. Treasures may be in it, but nothing short of dynamite would get them out until the lock goes off. Why, once—— But never mind about that. Let us be more recent. This happened yesterday:

One of the nicest women I know sent me two books to sign—two of my own books, she being a true and kind-hearted friend of the family, who understands authors. Nothing pleases an author so much as to be asked to sign his own books, books that have been bought and paid for in the open market. He would like to do it all day and give up authoring, or authorizing, whichever is the correct word. Then for pastime he could sit under the evening lamp and clip coupons.

But there's one thing an author does not like—no author of my acquaintance; he does not like to tie up and address and stamp packages. He dreads that formula—it is poison to him. He would rather take the books under his arm and put in the day, if necessary, delivering them himself.

That is what I did. I took the two books which the kind lady had sent, after I had carefully inscribed them and added some pretty sentiment—something about not being "too proud to

write" or of that sparkling nature—and started for town, we being of the suburbs. I would not go directly to our friend's house, I said. I would do some business errands first, and drop in with the books along in the afternoon, say about tea time. That is what I said, and, knowing my unvarying habit of memory, I added that I would never let them out of my sight for an instant during all that time.

The morning went well enough. Of course I had to put the books down for a moment at the club while I was reading a letter, and it was not until I was two blocks away, getting on a car, that the time clock gave a little click that sent me sweating back for them. The letter required reply, and I had to put them down again in the telegraph office, but the clerk who counted the words whooped at me before I got quite out of reach, so that was all right. I had to put them down, of course, while I was getting a bite to eat, somewhere along Park Row, but the waiter caught me halfway across the square, making for the Subway extrance, and I only had to double his tip, which was a real pleasure. So it was a pretty good morning, as I say; I had held faithfully to the books, and it seemed unlikely that anything could happen to them now. The Subway would take me very near to a friend's room on Fifty-ninth Street, where I would rest and spruce up a bit, and the lady of the books lived but a few doors away. I could manage the rest safely, without doubt. Ah, me!



A LARGE HIGHLY COLORED LADY WITH A SMALL NEAR-SIGHTED DOG



AN EXCURSION IN MEMORY

I bought a paper and read it on the way uptown. I could recall that much, afterward; also, that the books were then lying on my lap. That is why it seemed unaccountable later that I should not have them-I mean after I got to my friend's room and had rested a little and was about ready to call on the lady down the block. I was just pulling my tie into shape when I realized with a slight chill that the lady's books were not lying on the table in front of me. Neither were they on the chair beside it, nor on the other chair by the window, nor on the dresser, nor on the floor. My friend is a downtown man-hours nine to five-so I could not ask him about it, or blame him. Oh, I had left them on the train, of course. After lugging them about all day, now, on the last lap, I had lost them. Profanity is poor consolation at such a time, but it's about all we have.

Now where were they? In time they would get to the "Lost and Found," no doubt. I did not seem to fear that any one would be fascinated by them enough to lose his moral balance and carry them home. No, they would be handed in. But Lost and Found was somewhere in the dark spaces below Fourteenth Street, and meant time and heavy effort. I would telephone my publisher to send up two more copies post haste—special messenger, and dern the expense!

But Central rang and rang, and no publisher. I begged her to try again, and to keep on trying. Finally we got something; a dusty voice said,

"Well, what do you want?" I explained feverishly. The voice hemmed and balked and seemed to be spitting out ashes. Then it said: "This is Saturday, and there ain't nobody here afternoons. I'm the janitor."

"But—but don't you think you could find two of those books and bring them up? I'll give

you---',

I forget what I was going to give him; but no matter, he didn't wait.

"Books nothin'!" he interrupted, impolitely, and I felt that the interview was closed. I must hunt up those lost books—there was no other way. I have a prompt nature. I set out immediately.

The ticket-seller at Fifty-ninth Street explained that very likely my property had not yet reached Lost and Found. It would be held at the upper terminal he thought, to go down in the evening with the usual daily consignment of such stuff. I was on an uptown train before he was through talking.

There wasn't much to do, so I put in my time furtively observing a large, highly colored lady and a small, drab, near-sighted dog who sat opposite, instead of in the limousine where they clearly belonged. It was not permissible to bring dogs into Subway trains, and I reasoned that this one must have come in under his mistress's ample sealskin. Her cool, not to say brazen, indifference to the flagrant irregularity of his presence was impressive.

AN EXCURSION IN MEMORY

But it was the dog that interested me. He was such an inadequate specimen of all that I felt a dog should be. He had an ingrowing face, abortive legs, and, aside from his hair, was of no bulk to speak of. Possibly he weighed a pound. Such dogs come from Peking, I am told, where it is also fashionable to bind women's feet.

He was a listless dog. He slept on the seat by the luminous lady, and only opened his myopic eyes for a second or two, now and then, to stare blearily in my direction. He fascinated me. I became so absorbed in him that I temporarily forgot his proprietor. I wasn't even fully conscious when, at a station somewhere up in the hundred and sixties, that fine person rose and went out. A number of others crowded out then, and several crowded in. The train was about to move on when I realized, dear me! that careless woman had forgotten her dog! Think of forgetting a dog!

I am a prompt person, as I say—more prompt than reflective. It might have occurred to me that by merely lingering in the neighborhood of a lost dog I might regain my own property; but it didn't. Nothing useful ever occurs to me at such a time—I just act. Indeed, as I think now, I did not recall my own loss at the moment, or why I was on the train in that unusual section of the city. What I did was to scoop up the property of the calcimined lady and make a bound for the door. It was more than half closed, but the guard,

observing my charge, hastily let me squeeze through. The object of my search was not on the platform. She had already ascended to the

pavement.

There were two stairways, and I picked the wrong one. Some seconds later I was in the middle of the street, looking with considerable anxiety in one direction after another for a large vision of sealskin, sweeping plumes, and red hair, gripping meantime that insipid dog. He had been asleep when deserted, but, being no longer asleep, he was inclined to protest, kicking with surprising vigor, for one of his parts. I also made some inquiries, but without result. Then of a sudden I caught a glimpse of red and plumes and bounded after it. I had run full half a block before I discovered that it was not she. A wave of despair swept over me; I had annexed that dog permanently. Many years I had escaped owning a dog. All kinds have been offered me by loving friends who were going to Europe, or into matrimony, or were otherwise retiring from the dog business-mastiffs, St. Bernards, bulls-noble dogs that I have fondly but firmly declined. Now here I was saddled with a dog, and such a dog!

I turned down a side street and walked quite fast, thinking intently. It was a dull, thick day, and nothing about the locality seemed cheerful. Passers regarded me curiously. If I only could give him to one of them; but I did not quite know how to go about it. It would be unusual,

AN EXCURSION IN MEMORY

I thought, to step up to a perfect stranger on the street and say, "Won't you let me give you a dog?" Perhaps I could leave him in a hall, and kindly souls would find him. Of course I might have taken him to the upper terminal—it was where I was bound for, anyway; only memory had its time clock on again, and I had no real notion of where I was going, or why. I only realized that dog—the bandy-legged, bulgy-eyed, incompetent little shrimp that was struggling and snuffling under my arm.

I was passing an entrance to a sort of court, just then, the back way to a lofty apartment-house—a home for the rich and great. I imagined I heard children's voices in there—children playing. Ah, just the thing! I would slip in part way, put him down, and gently shoo him in that direction. Then I would go away. Those dear children would love him.

But he would not shoo. When I placed him carefully on the cement and softly shooed, he seemed to make up his mind that I was a pretty good sort, after all, and that he would play with me. Soon he began describing half-circles a little distance away; then he gave a weak little bark of pure joy.

"Go in there," I breathed, urgently; "go to a

happy home. We are not for each other."

He seated himself, regarded me gravely, and gave another of those feeble, yapping barks. I picked him up again. I recalled for the moment

that I had other business and must attend to it. But I didn't—not immediately. Before I could turn I felt a heavy hand on my shoulder. I was startled; but it was all right, it was only a police officer. He said:

"What are you doing with that dog?"

The italics were his, and for the moment I could not clearly remember just what I was doing with that dog. Then I seemed to recall that I had been trying to find the owner, and said so.

"In this alley, I suppose?" he commented with

deep sarcasm. "You come with me."

It seemed best to go. I hadn't much else to do just then, anyway. He took the dog under his other arm and we started into the street. Half-way down the block, headed in our direction, and a good deal winded from rapid movement was the large, bright lady of fur and feathers. I realized then that she had discovered her loss and put the law on my trail—easy enough to follow, for I had not been unobserved. She came up, panting heavily.

"Oh, 'oo pressus, darlin' doggums Cheefoojums," she gurgled. "Did old, bad man carry him off—and nice officer find him? Now bad man go to jail—yes, he will!"

I found her voice distinctly disagreeable. It

stimulated me to be severe.

"Madame," I said, "you carelessly walked off and left your dog on the train, where it had no right to be in the first place. I ran after you with

AN EXCURSION IN MEMORY

it, but you had disappeared. I should think if you cared so much for your precious Chee-foojums you would try to remember him."

"Lady," said the blue-coated hero, "do you

wish to enter a charge against this man?"

But she was paying not the slightest attention to either of us. We had reached the highly ornate entrance of an apartment adjacent to the Subway entrance just then, and she disappeared through its swinging doors. As they closed behind her my animosity vanished. Had she not relieved me of doggums Chee-foojums? Few angels could have done more. My captor regarded me sternly.

"You may go," he said, "but don't let me catch

you around this neighborhood again."

His instructions were unnecessary. It was not an interesting neighborhood. On a gloomy December afternoon it was depressing. I plunged down the Subway stairs and took the first train, regardless of direction. My time lock loosened up just then and I realized why I was there; also, that I was headed back for Fifty-ninth Street.

"It has been an interesting day," I said. "I will now go back to my friend's room, leave him a note of thanks, and return to the suburbs and Elizabeth. Next week I will visit Lost and Found, or get two perfectly fresh books from

my publishers and try it again."

It was dark when I reached my friend's room, it being about five, and a dull winter day, as I have said. I therefore touched the electric button

by the door as I entered. Then I noticed something. It was a newspaper—the one I had read on the train—long, how long, ago—coming uptown. Also, it was wrapped around something—two books—my books, the ones I had carried about all day for the kind lady down the street. Why, of course. I remembered now, perfectly: I had placed them there as I entered the first time, in a chair by the door, to have them handy. It is always dim back there, owing to the screen, even on a bright day, which accounts, of course, for my having overlooked them later. Still, I have been known to look straight at a thing without seeing it—so Elizabeth says.

I did not let go of them again until I stood in the drawing-room of their owner.

"Oh," she ventured, "how good of you to bring them yourself. I'm afraid you found it a trouble."

"Not in the least," I said.

NE morning our mason dropped in, really intending to work. At least, such was his statement. He had visited us a number of times before, merely to look over the ground and comment on the plans of our new addition. This time he meant business. He was dressed for labor, and anxious to get at it.

I wondered why he did not do so. I could not see why he should merely look down into the opening in the floor where the fireplace was to go, whistling softly, meanwhile, as if he expected the chimney to grow to that accompaniment. Presently I ventured to ask if there were any special reasons why active operations should not begin. He gave me a brief glance.

"Can't work without material," he said.

"Oh, but the brick and stuff are just outside. I thought you knew that."

"I do know it. I'm waiting for my helper to

bring 'em in."

"Oh yes, of course," I assented weakly; "I forgot the helper"—which was true, though I did not see why our mason should not bring in a few things himself—enough to do until his belated helper arrived.

I summonded up more courage—a good deal

this time.

"But—that is—couldn't you bring in a few things, as a starter?" I asked.

He smiled at my ignorance.

"Can't do that," he said; "union won't allow it."

"Oh, the union—I see."

He nodded. More precious moments flitted. I went to the door to gaze up and down for the delinquent.

"Look here," I said, "I'm anxious to get this work along. I'll bring in some stuff for you."

"Sorry, but that won't go, either. You don't belong to the union."

Without doubt I had a good deal to learn. I could see, too, that I had made a mistake in not joining the hod-carriers' union. Perhaps it was not too late to remedy this.

"Is that fellow likely to turn up at all?" I asked.

Our mason became dùbious.

"Don't look so," he said. "Mebbe this is one of his off days. He has 'em."

I then inquired upon the matter of unions, and the proper method of joining one. It was explained to me that the applicant received a card at head-quarters that entitled him to recognition. It seemed to me that a card like that would be a useful thing to have, not necessarily as a means of livelihood, but for use in an emergency like the present.

"I suppose I could get one," I said.

The mason thought it possible. I am inclined to be impulsive and to act quickly. Five minutes later I was on the way downtown, and within half an hour had been directed to a union headquarters.

The clerk in charge regarded me doubtfully. My explanation did not altogether satisfy him.

"Have you ever done any carrying?" he asked.

"Carrying! Well, I should think I have. I am a suburban resident. I have been carrying bundles and ashes and a heavy mortgage for the last five years."

Eventually he gave me the card. I tried not to feel, or to show, my new importance as I journeyed homeward.

I hurried in to where the mason was still waiting. The helper had not come.

"Now we'll get at it," I rejoiced, and displayed

my credentials.

There was real pity in the mason's face.

"Why, now, that's too bad," he said. "You have gone to the wrong place. That ain't our union at all."

"There are two, then. I didn't know." He nodded assent.

"But if I have this I'm union-label and can work, can't I?"

"Nope, not with me. Not on this job, either,"

he added. "The other men would strike."

I did not put into words my reflections upon this development. I simply got explicit directions,

and within an hour I was back, this time with qualifications that entitled me to carry in my own brick and mortar, with a view to having it used in my own house for the construction of my own chimney. It was luncheon hour by this time, and both my boss and myself ate heartily in the prospect of a heavy afternoon's work.

I was on hand when the whistle blew, dressed for the part. My boss gave me an order or two, also a few simple instructions as to methods, though I could see he did this rather uneasily, regarding the carpenters and tinners furtively meanwhile.

"There you are," he said, when the mortar had attained a consistency that agreed with his ideas. "Get next, now, and let's push this job along. There's been enough time wasted on it."

I "got next," and for four hours knew the happiness of honest toil and of seeing my chimney grow. My boss said he had never had a more active helper. He even hinted that he would engage me permanently if I thought of going into the construction line as a regular thing. However, I resigned next morning in favor of his regular assistant, who appeared at a reasonable hour, though somewhat depressed, perhaps from remorse. I could see at once that he was not so energetic a workman as myself, and why the mason had been willing to exchange.

Meantime my man for nailing on laths, who was to have come that morning, did not appear.

The plasterers were engaged for the next morning, and, unless the lathing was done, they would be delayed. I besought one of my carpenters.

"Suppose you let that outside work go," I

said, "and put these lath on."

"Can't do it," he said; "union won't let me."

"Why, you're a carpenter."

"Yep, but that's different."

"Um! Yes, I see. Well, I'll just put those lath on myself. I learned carpentering as a boy, and I can handle a hammer yet."

My boss of the day before interfered at this point.

"Sorry," he said, "but you can't do it, either. There'll be a strike ordered if you do."

"But I belong to the union now," I argued.

"Not the lathers' union."

"Then I'll join."

There were difficulties about this. It is not customary for one man to belong to an aggregation of unions, though there appeared to be no well-defined rule to the contrary. Besides, my capabilities as well as my necessities seemed exceptional. An hour later I had another card in my pocket, and was nailing on laths and pounding my fingers at union rates.

I should have had the job finished by quitting time, but, not being an adept, the whistle blew too soon for me. I went right on nailing, seeing it was my own job. It was the boss carpenter who interfered.

"Here," he called, "knock off."

"I've got to finish this to-night," I answered, whacking a finger that had become almost immune to pain.

"Can't work overhours. The union won't al-

low it."

"Oh, blow the ---"

"That is, except at double wages, of course. If you can't get double wages for overtime, you have to quit when the whistle blows."

I considered this a minute. I was a rather poor lather, and could not have got my present wages if I had not belonged to the union. Certainly I was not worth double rates. Still, there were those plasterers coming in the morning.

"All right," I said; "the owner has agreed to

the terms."

It was far in the night when those laths were all on. Elizabeth helped me after the baby was asleep. She held the lamp and handed me laths and nails. All at once I remembered that she didn't belong to the union.

"Look here," I said, "I've got to strike. If you work on this job without a card, I can't."

She set down the lamp quite willingly and started for the door. She had already threatened to go every time I pounded my finger and commented on the occurrence.

"Wait!" I said. "I have just recalled the fact that we are one. I don't know what the rules are in such cases, but for to-night, at least, my

card will serve. You may resume the lamp and pass up a few nails."

I was rather glad, I think, when my plasterer came next morning without his helper. The man was sick and had sent a substitute, who did not appear. It seemed a bad season for helpers. I said it did not matter—that I had given up business, anyway, until my house should be done, and that I would mix and carry the necessary mud. I had an idea, of course, that my diploma as general hod-carrier would warrant my undertaking these similar duties. But this was a mis-It required another trip to headquarters and new credentials. This was becoming interesting. I was acquiring a collection of labor cards, which, it seemed to me, might be worth while to complete. Besides, I could feel that somewhere down deep there was the growing ambition to become an entire union within myself.

I extended my sphere of usefulness. When my painter hinted that it was a good morning for tomcods to bite, I told him to go fishing, by all means, and, to continue the job, allied myself to the brush-swingers' union, for which I was fitted by the conditions of my active early life. Then I joined the itinerant tinkers' union in order to patch a small but persistent leak in the dishpan, the lamp fitters' union to enable me to screw a new burner on the kitchen candelabra, and the hose nozzlers' union when I wanted to fit a washer on the garden sprinkler.

When I had joined the fire makers' unions, in in order to care for my furnace properly, I proceeded to project a few unions on my own account. The lawn mowers' union was one of these, also the shoe polishers' union, and the ancient and honorable order of dish wipers, the last named during the absence of our household attaché.

My enthusiasm was contagious. Into my new personality of the United Workman my fellow employees were quite ready to merge the identity of the owner, whom we abused roundly and declared that shorter hours and more pay, with a complete recognition of our union and destruction to all others, was what was needed.

We discussed other matters. My fellow workmen promulgated the idea that an owner could not consistently bring other than union articles on his premises. When it was discovered that my lawn mower was not of this brand, it was evicted. There was a man with a good union mower who had expressed a willingness to join any union or anything else for the privilege of mowing my lawn. His doing this work was somewhat contrary to Elizabeth's ideas of economy, but I felt justified now in engaging him, in order to avoid the strike which seemed imminent, and which I should have been obliged to join. From time to time my associates examined our household articles, but when they objected to certain plates and pieces of furniture, all of which they felt at liberty to overhaul at will, I averted disaster by explaining that these

were known as antiques and had been manufactured perhaps several generations before the country had experienced the blessings of perfect union as understood from the industrial point of view.

Nevertheless, it was not in the nature of things that our job should be completed without upheaval. Elizabeth went out shopping one morning, and during the noon hour there was a new go-cart for the baby delivered at the rear door. The workmen saw it as they returned from dinner, and stopped to examine it. I saw them view it at various angles, and finally turn it bottom upward. They halted me as I came out. McManus the carpenter was spokesman.

"This ain't union-label," he said, pointing an

accusing finger at the small vehicle.

I joined them in the examination. If there was any label, I failed to find it. My fellow workmen shook their heads.

I made a feeble effort to modify the offense and avert disaster.

"But don't you think this is really outside of our agreement?" I said. "You see, the owner didn't buy this, and the owner's wife and baby are another matter."

But this would not do at all.

I was delegated as a committee of one to wait on the lady; but it was unnecessary, for she came to the door just then, the baby in her arms.

"I am sorry there is going to be a strike," she said, quite cheerfully. (She had evidently over-

heard the discussion.) "I did look at union carts, but they did not please me and the baby howled when I put him into one, so we bought this. Mr. McManus," she asked, suddenly, "is that new straw hat of yours union made?"

McManus did not seem to get hold of his words properly. He had to make several rather poor efforts before he managed to say that he thought

it was-that the dealer had told him so.

"Oh, I see. You took the dealer's word for it. The union label had dropped off, I suppose."

A great relief was in McManus's face as he swore fervently that this was the precise truth.

Giles, the mason, was the next victim.

"Those new shoes of yours, Mr. Giles, they are union made, of course. You need not remove them to show the label. I will take your word for it."

I fear Mr. Giles did not perjure himself with very good grace. Elizabeth then directed her battery upon Mullins, the second carpenter.

"You are smoking a union cigar, of course, Mr. Mullins. A good union man like you would never

be seen smoking at scab cigar."

Mullins's reply was a real effort.

"Well, mum," he managed to say at last—"that is, mum, no—not if he could help it, mum."

I felt called upon to interfere.

"This," I said, "is becoming very personal. The matter under discussion was the owner's rights, not those of the workmen. I don't think

our constitution covers the particular items you mention."

"Constitution?" Elizabeth smiled. "Oh, your constitution! Well, there is another constitution you may have heard of, and there is something in it about equal rights and liberties, and the pursuit of happiness. I don't remember just the wording. I learned it a good while ago at school." She swung the go-cart around and turned down the path, the baby looking at us and waving his fists. "We'll be back when the strike is over!" she called, as she turned the corner. Then she disappeared, and left us regarding nothing in particular and saying nothing at all. McManus, it is true, did make an apparent effort for speech, and perhaps Giles had a similar inclination. Neither reached the point of utterance.

"See here," I said, suddenly addressing the others; "perhaps, after all, we'd better arbitrate this."

There seemed to be no dissent. I caught Elizabeth just as she got to the pavement.

"Hold on," I called. "Let's discuss this matter."

She halted without any apparent reluctance. We were around the corner now, where my associates could not see us.

"Our friends," I said, "are in favor of arbitration, and, of course, a willingness to arbitrate is always a good sign in a case of this sort."

She held up her finger.

"Listen; they're already at it," she whispered. And it was true. There was a sound of hammer and saw and trowel as we turned back up the path.

AFTERWORD

Eventually our job came to an end. It is true, it required ten weeks instead of the ten days' contract time; also, that almost at the close we were obliged to remove some carefully set tiling when we discovered that it had been made in a non-union factory, and to replace it with something rather less satisfying. But these things are mere detail. I could quite see the reason for changing the tile by the time we came to it, even at the cost of good taste and several dollars in money.

Indeed, I consider myself a past master now in the code and diplomacy of general union construction, and I contemplate soliciting employment in that direction. I am also qualified to do any sort of work that comes along. That is to say, I belong to all the unions. I can do any odd job of building or painting or patching or mending that comes my way. If any job comes along that my credentials don't cover, I'll join another union. I don't profess to be a skillful workman. It is not necessary that I should be. What I lack in skill I make up in union. Union is the necessary requirement, and union wages, with double pay for overtime. Anybody having a house, or a part of a house, to build, or even a roof to patch, or a door to hang, or a glass to put in, or a porch to

paint, or a furnace to clean, or a lawn to mow, or a baby to nurse, or clothes to hang out, or anything else under the shining sun, may call or communicate with me at the old address. I will not promise to do any of these jobs as well as the owners themselves could do them, or to get through at any specified time, or not to be called out on a strike when the job is half done, but I will promise not to allow any of my various capacities to conflict and so produce a strike within myself; also, that whatever labor I perform shall be union labor, and that no other man of my union-of any of my unions - can refuse to remain under the roof because I am there. And this is a great thing. You will not realize how great a thing it really is until you have been brought suddenly face to face with the union problem in your own home. When this occurs, do not hesitate. Send at once for the union of unions, the original United Workman.

REFORMING VERNY

YOU know Percy, of course—Percy of the evening paper—that harmless, happy-hearted bounder and bluffer, that "big washing and small hang-out" who with his friend Ferdie is always trying to "put something over" in the way of a large impression, and so rarely (too rarely for our happiness) escapes disaster. Our sympathy is with Percy and his friend—wrongly, perhaps, but it is there. They are such cheerful pikers and, in the long run, so square.

I am personally acquainted with Percy-not the identical Percy, but a member of his family, I am sure. He has the same lightsome nature, the same longing to be known as among the elect, the same quick rebound and recovery. There is a difference, however. Our Percy, whose real name is Mr. Vernon Disbrow, is not in "gents' furnishing," but hardware, and his great side specialty is high finance. Verny has long been a boarder with us at the old London Terrace place on West Twentythird Street, where I sometimes sojourn when Elizabeth is absent, and his great specialty is, or was, "doing something handsome in the Street." His old friend and schoolmate, "Reggie Keene," who fairly wallowed in wealth, with a seat on the Stock Exchange, was always letting him in on



"OH, BUT YOU MIGHT GIVE US A CHECK, YOU KNOW!" SAID MISS MITTENS



REFORMING VERNY

something very choice, with the result that every little while Percy—Verny, I mean—came home with his chest out and a roll that would choke a horse, which he managed to exhibit in the course of the evening, jerked it out quite accidentally, asked the company's pardon, and passed it off with a wave of the hand and some airy persiflage about "a little flurry in Tonopah" or something—"just a minor deal with Reggie Keene—nothing much, a few hundred, too late for the bank to-night."

That always impressed us. We being impecunious, credulous lambs, the sight of much money awed us. Also, when Verny arrayed himself in glad splendor, and told us that he was going out to dine with Reggie Keene and his set, we believed him. Certainly he looked the part.

But then we learned to doubt. A newspaper chap came to London Terrace, and nothing seemed hidden from his X-ray vision. He had been there about a week when Verny came into the parlor one night just before dinner, clad in radiant evening garments.

"Well, well!" we said. "What's on tonight?" Verny smiled blandly, waved his hands lightly, and brought them together with a mellifluous little smack.

"Oh, not much—just a bit of evening gayety with Reggie Keene, my old schoolmate, you know; sort of a quiet celebration—dinner, opera, and that sort.

His handkerchief came out with a flourish and a fat bundle with a hundred-dollar wrapper tumbled on the floor. Miss Pankers, who does library work, said, "Oh!" and handed it reverently to its owner.

"Ah, thanks, Miss Pankers. No great matter, I assure you. Result of a little quick turn this morning in Axle Preferred—one of those war babies, you know. Phone tip from Reggie. Too late to bank, unfortunately. Probably most of it will go to-night. On me, this time, you see. So—so. Pleasant evening, everybody."

The door closed and Miss Mittens, who does something in publicity and is a pretty live person

herself, said, thoughtfully:

"I wonder if it's always really as he says. But he is amusing."

Nobody ventured anything for a minute or two, then O'Shay of the *Star* said, "Does it happen like this often?"

"Well, quite often; say once a month."

"Always the same way?"

"Oh no! It isn't always when he's going out. Sometimes it's when he's playing cards and is hunting in his pocket for a paper to keep score on. Sometimes it happens when he pulls out his gloves."

"Is it always in the evening?"

"Well, it's been known to occur in the morning when he was starting to business."

"Did you ever check up the stocks to see if they had really gone up, as he said?"

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"Oh yes! He frequently shows us that himself."
"Well," said O'Shay, "you're an easy bunch.
What he does is to look over the Wall Street edition before he comes home and pick out some stock that has had a boost during the day. Then he gets his bundle of hard-earned savings from the office safe to throw his bluff with. No stock deal is closed with cash. In a thousand transactions he'd have no excuse for handling any real money. Does that mazuma of his always look about the same?"

We admitted that it generally did have a pretty familiar look. There was always a large bill in view.

"Same old wad every time," laughed O'Shay. "Brown paper and dollar bills inside. He's a merry bluffer, that friend of yours. We ought to have some fun with him. Vernon Disbrow—huh! Probably started as plain Jim Smith."

We felt that we were going to doubt Verny after that. O'Shay had shaken our faith in his high finance. Very likely even Reggie Keene was a myth. O'Shay said there was no such member of the Stock Exchange—that if he had a seat anywhere it was on the Curb. Of course he might be a member of an Exchange firm, O'Shay said, but we agreed that even this was most unlikely. Once started on the road to doubt, we had taken a through ticket. . . .

"I hope, Mr. Disbrow, you and Reggie Keene didn't spend all that Axle Preferred last night," said Miss Mittens, next morning at breakfast.

"Just about, Miss Mittens. A box with the

Misses Van Beekman, refreshments with vintage 'ninety-eight, then bridge at Reggie's club later are rather expensive diversions. Nothing in the long run, of course, but a neat little sum for one evening."

"I suppose that, after all, you couldn't spare me a dollar for the Red Cross drive? I'm one of

the collectors, you know."

Verny barely hesitated, then pulled a single mussy dollar from his vest pocket and handed it over with quite a grand sweep. This was disappointing. We had hoped it would be necessary for him either to decline or produce the main package.

"Too bad," he said, "you didn't remind me of it last night. Could have made it fifty then just

as easy as one."

"Oh, but you might give us a check, you know!" said Miss Mittens.

"Why—why, yes—yes indeed! Only you see"—feeling in one breast pocket and another—"I haven't my check-book here. I might do it tonight if I don't have to use all my ready funds in a deal that Reggie has planned for this week. Something big next time."

"Oh, Mr. Disbrow, you are in so many big things! It must be wonderful to be a man and in great financial deals. By the way, what is your bank?"

"Ah—eh—why, the City National!"

"How splendid to be in a bank like that! Oh,

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I wonder if you wouldn't give me a letter of introduction! I want to open an account, and I'd just love to be in a really big bank."

Mr. Disbrow repressed a tendency to cough,

holding his napkin to his lips.

"De-delighted, Miss Mittens, delighted, I assure you. Only, you see, the president himself told me only last week that they were not taking any new accounts—personal accounts—they are so overwhelmed. I thought they might be asking me to go next, but he put his arm over my shoulder. 'Verny, my boy,' he said, 'we mean to keep the members of our home family.'"

Mr. Disbrow rose and, waving us a gay goodby, departed to his daily task. Miss Mittens said, as she folded the mussy dollar:

"The very next time he exhibits that package of money I'm going to get hold of it. I want to see what it's stuffed with."

But perhaps Verny was a mind-reader. Perhaps he had sensed the astuteness of O'Shay. The next time the market got excited he did not do the handkerchief-and-bundle trick.

"Quite a killing on the Street to-day," he said. "It's pretty nice to be on the inside when that sort of thing is pulled off. Baldwin ten points to the good to-night. It will do better, but I decided to sell, and advised Reggie Keene to. 'Reggie, old man,' I said, 'let's give the next man a chance.' 'Right you are,' he said, and let his holdings go with mine."

"Oh, Mr. Disbrow, won't you show us all that money?" Miss Mittens asked, sweetly.

"Not to-night, fair one. The transaction was

late. Settlement to-morrow."

"Let us all in, next time, won't you?" said O'Shay. "Your friend Reggie won't mind your passing a good thing along—just to a few indigent friends."

Verny put up his finger.

"Reggie Keene," he said, "wouldn't give a hint to his own brother a day in advance. I never know until the very day—sometimes not till the hour. No—no, not Reggie."

But the next evening Mr. Disbrow came in rather late and with impressive importance. He was literally on tiptoe—his finger at his lips.

"What is it this time, Verny?" called Miss

Mittens, with lively familiarity.

Verny extended his hands as if pronouncing a benediction.

"'Sh!" he said, solemnly. "You folks wanted a tip—I'll give you one. Listen!" his voice falling to a hoarse whisper. "It's oil! Buy—Big—Punch! They haven't struck it yet, but they've got the ground and are boring, and when they hit it the stock will jump to ten, fifty, a hundred dollars a share—stock that can be had to-day for a dollar. There was a fellow in the store, in the paint department, named Billy Barker. He went to Texas last year and got into oil. He's here now looking after machinery and told me to-day about Big Punch. He says

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they've got the location for a gusher. He says they're likely to strike it any time. It looks good to me. Think of it! A thousand shares at a dollar a share, on a twenty-per-cent margin. Two-hundred-dollar gamble with the chance to win a hundred thousand. Now if you want a real tip, there is one, and don't say I didn't tell you! Easy money, eh?"

If Verny expected a sensation he was disappointed. The wave of excitement that followed his revelation was quite feeble.

Miss Pankers said, "How wonderful!"

Miss Mittens said, "Oh, boy!"

O'Shay said, "Sure, Verny, we'll all be rich in a week." The rest of us went on with the game, and most of us forgot it before morning. We were on to Verny. As for Big Punch, we had never heard of it and didn't believe any body else had. Verny's mania was taking a new form.

Perhaps our gay friend seemed a little silent, a little less buoyant, for a few days after that, but war news was not very good just then and we were all rather depressed. O'Shay did prod him a little one night with:

"Well, how's Big Punch to-day, Mr. Magnate? Stock soaring yet? I've been expecting any night to see you come pushing a wheelbarrow-load of money. By the way, where is that old wad you used to sling around here? It's been rather scarce since I came."

Verny was clearly intimidated by the sophisticated O'Shay. Nevertheless, he could answer. "It hasn't seemed safe to have money around since then," he said, dryly, which rather left the laugh on O'Shay.

The reporter took it good-naturedly enough, but it may have rankled the least bit, for by and by, when Verny was called to the telephone, he said: "The next time that young man tries to put over one of his big deals I'm going to give him a nice improving talk."

"Oh," protested Miss Mittens, "please don't spoil him for us! He's such good fun as he is.

Don't you all think so?"

We all confessed a weakness for Yerny, though admitting that modified reform might be a good thing. O'Shay said:

"He's a good fellow, all right—too good to be working that bluff game. I'm going to save him."

Verny came back just then from telephoning. Miss Mittens said:

"I suppose you've been talking to Reggie Keene. Something big in finance for to-morrow, of course; or is it to-morrow night at the Van Beekmans'?"

Verny seemed a trifle flushed and I thought his chest had a tendency to prominence, but he only smiled blandly.

"Oh no! You are quite wrong—quite wrong," he protested, as he picked up his hand. "Just an old friend—not quite of the social set, you know."

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"Latest news from Big Punch," grunted O'Shay, to nobody in particular, as he played second hand low, while Miss Mittens, who was his partner, giggled. Verny did not notice the remark openly, but he played the wrong card.

He was late coming home the next evening. Most of us had finished dinner and were in the parlor when he arrived.

"Hey, old man," called O'Shay, "we're waiting on you, to begin the game! What have you been up to? Cornering the market again, I suppose, though I didn't hear any extras called."

Mr. Disbrow smiled benignly on the company. "I judge you are all pretty comfortably off tonight," he said, twirling his mustache—a trifle nervously, I thought.

"Sure," said O'Shay. "We've had our dinner, if that's what you mean."

"Not entirely, Mr. O'Shay. I mean the news from the Big Punch—though possibly you haven't heard it. The evening papers, like yours, O'Shay, don't think it worth while in the press of war news to mention the striking of a mere gusher in Texas, important as the event may be to us shareholders. It gives me pleasure, therefore, to inform those who followed my advice and purchased stock in the Big Punch prospect that the Big Punch drill last evening struck a giant gusher—the largest in that region. Billy Barker telephoned me his first report last night. Stock to-day sold up to a hundred and ten. It will sell higher, of course, but I

decided to let mine go. Quite a neat little killing—a hundred thousand or so. I've about decided to take a permanent vacation on it."

O'Shay laid down the cards he'd been shuffling and there was a resolute look in his face. A few perfunctory exclamations came from some of the others, such as: "How wonderful!" "See what we've missed!" "Oh, take us along, Verny!" and the like. O'Shay said:

"Verny, my son, sit down here. I'm going to talk to you like a father."

Verny dropped into his regular place at the cardtable obediently—almost timidly.

"I haven't known you as long as the rest have," O'Shay went on, "but you're a good sport, all right, and I like you—everybody does. Don't we?" turning to the rest of us.

There was a prompt and generous assent. "Of course! of course! Oh, yes indeed we all just love him! He's so kind-hearted!"—the last from Miss Mittens.

"Sure—that's the way we feel," proceeded O'Shay, "but you've got one fault, and it's easily remedied. You want to cut out this financial and society stuff. It's harmless enough—you don't borrow any money on it—but it's vanity, and in time will lose you friends. You don't fool anybody by exposing a bunch of dough to the gang here and playing it as a stock winning, or with that talk about Reggie Keene and the Van Beekman girls. That was a good enough spiel while

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the folks fell for it, but they're on now, and they'd like you better without it. Come now, we're at the mourners' bench. Confess that there isn't any Reggie Keene or Van Beekman girls—not in your set."

I think all our hearts ached for Verny. Miss Pankers murmured:

"Oh, Mr. O'Shay!"

Verny himself did not immediately reply. He shifted a little in his chair and had a helpless, hunted look. Then he smiled rather feebly and seemed to enter into the spirit of the occasion.

"Oh, all right," he said. "I don't mind confessing, now that you're all on to it. That was just a little joke—jeu d'esprit, as the French say—

also camouflage, you know."

"Of course," said O'Shay, benevolently. "And that wad of money, it was the same old roll, wasn't it, right along? Money that you'd worked hard and honestly for and saved, a little at a time, and that never saw Wall Street—isn't that so?"

"That's what it was," acknowledged Verny. "There was two hundred dollars of it. A hundred in ones and a one-hundred-dollar bill, or sometimes two fifties. Confession is certainly good for the soul, O'Shay; I'm feeling better every minute."

"Of course you are. And now this Big Punch business, with Billy Barker from Texas—this dollar a share last week and your giant gusher at a

hundred and ten to-day; sift that out of your soul and we'll start fresh from to-night, pure in heart and white as the driven snow. Give us the last dregs of truth, Verny, and see how we'll all love you."

Verny looked about on the assembled company as if for support. We had all drawn about the table of inquisition, our hearts full of sympathy and friendship. He smiled a little—a smile that

gradually became bland and expansive.

"Yes, indeed," he said, "in this great moment let us make the confession full and complete. The same truth that compelled me to give up Reggie Keene and the Van Beekman girls prompts me to declare that there was indeed a Billy Barker who left our paint department last year for the Texas oilfields. Also, that he did come back last week with some dope about the Big Punch, which I passed along to you. Also, that I was a good deal worried later, for oil is slippery stuff and I was afraid you'd get in wrong. I did take a chance myself and put in the two hundred-all I hadmargin on a thousand shares. I've been on the verge of heart-failure for a week over it. Billy telephoned me last night that he guessed maybe they'd struck something, and to-day I did manage to get rid of the stuff without loss, as you see."

He drew from his breast pocket an envelope and took out some papers which he spread on the table before us. We politely bent forward to look. It

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was a broker's memorandum of sale, and pinned to it was a check.

Talk about heart-failure! Our eyes fairly popped. The amount of it was just short of a hundred and ten thousand dollars.

AN ADVENTURE IN DECORATION

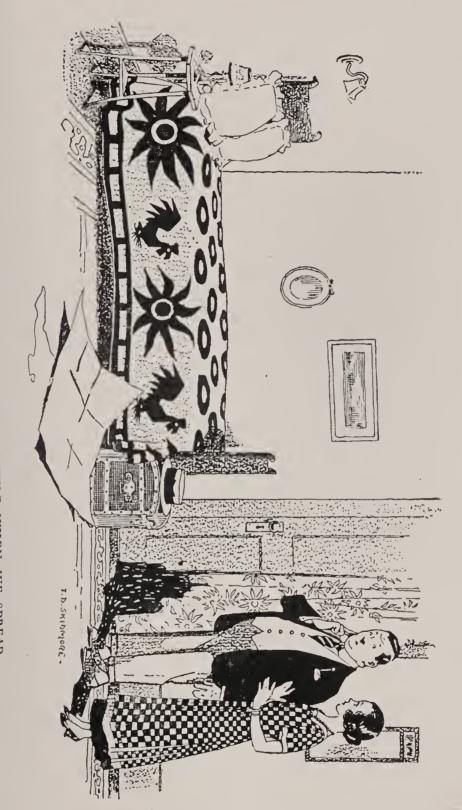
WE live in the suburbs, and, going in daily as I do, it is quite natural that I should do a good deal of the family shopping. I have no particular fondness for bundles, but I carry a good many, for Elizabeth likes to see the things the same evening and we both like to talk them over, so quite often it happens that I go home loaded almost to the danger line, being now rather stout, with a good deal of bilge, which is a safer model for boats than men. I remember one warm Saturday afternoon when I was on the 2:45 with a selection of hardware, including a gas oven, some flower pots, and an ice-cream freezer, a friend across the aisle passed me over this silly limerick:

Said the man with the rubicund face, "Some weight in these bundles I trace; An express, I confess, Would be well, and I guess That a dray would not be out of place."

But this is all by the way—mere decoration—the item I have in mind had no weight of consequence. It was—

But I will get on with my story.

Our spare-room bedspread was getting shabby. There was a white-goods sale at Johnamaker's. I



I COULD SEE THAT SHE GASPED A LITTLE WHEN WE SPREAD IT UPON THE BED AND BACKED AWAY FOR INSPECTION



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had brought home something, but it would never do—never in the world—not with the rest of our things. It was too pale—too anæmic—it belonged in a hospital ward. Elizabeth said:

"We need more color. Get something unusual, if you can, something you think Cousin Angela would like. She may visit us almost any time, you know."

It is proper to explain here that Cousin Angela is a spinster relative who has gone in professionally for home decoration. Her visits are pleasant enough, but likely to be disturbing and expensive. They generally mean pulling the old things about and adding some new ones. One cannot object, though. Her enthusiasm is so splendid—and masterful. I doubted my ability to please Cousin Angela, and I am not a purist in bedspreads. I have a habit, however, of obeying orders.

The salesman at Johnamaker's said he had just what I wanted—something unusual—with color in it—at a great bargain—the only one in stock. He pulled out a white-and-red scrimmy thing which he said was Honduras embroidery, and very

striking.

It was striking and had color, all right. The scrimmy stuff was a dead white and the embroidery was a blaze of red splashes, intermingled with roosters in red and green—also yellow—two assemblies of them, one running down each side. Red always catches me—red and green, with a touch of yellow—the combination answers to something

inherited from my Indian ancestor. I had misgivings when I thought of Elizabeth, but the price seemed cheap, and for the moment I did not remember Cousin Angela. Economy appeals to Elizabeth. She dearly loves a bargain, and this was a real one. My guess is that it had been on hand at Johnamaker's for years, waiting for a person of my taste to come along.

I told Elizabeth the price at which I had obtained "genuine Honduras hand-embroidery" before I opened it. Still, I could see that she gasped a little when we spread it upon the bed

and backed away for inspection.

"It certainly is unusual," she said. "The white is so white, and the other things so—so positive."

I could see that, now, myself. There was not another thing in the room so white, or so red, or so yellow, or so green. Those roosters belonged in the heart of nature.

"Perhaps age will tone it down," I suggested. "Suppose we hang it on the line for a week or so."

"That wouldn't help the white. I think we might stand the other things—if the white was brought down to a kind of tan—even the roosters. Styles rather run to the grotesque, now. I think I'll dip it in some dye I have."

I knew she would. Elizabeth has a passion for dipping things. Every little while she has a dye pot on the stove, at which times I lock up my clothes.

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"I'd hate to have Cousin Angela see it as it is," she added. "I'm afraid she'd think us crazy."

I had a cold chill. I had forgotten Cousin

Angela completely.

"Thanks," I said. "I'll return it at once."

But Elizabeth's bent for dipping was aroused and going strong. It was Saturday afternoon, but she would begin at once. She said the pattern of that spread was growing on her, and that with the white mildly dyed it would be an effective thing.

I had some work in the garage, and was attending to it, when Elizabeth called me. As she greeted me I thought her face wore a hunted look.

"See what I have done," she said.

She held up a section of the spread. The white was lower in tone, certainly, but it was not altogether a tan. It was, in fact, pinkish. The Honduras person had not used fast color for his red.

"It runs, in warm water," grieved Elizabeth. "I should have used cold, but it's too late now. I've rinsed and rinsed and I can't get it out. I'm afraid I've ruined it, unless I can make it brown enough to kill that pink."

"Do it," I said, "and see what happens. It's

too late for half measures now."

I went back to the garage, and about every half hour was summoned to inspect results. Our spread, from a pinkish tan took on successive shades of brownish, browner, brown. At the last

stage the pink was scarcely discoverable. If the other colors had lost anything we could not detect it. The blazing roosters were still vigorous, though certainly less vivid against their new background, which was definitely brown—redskin brown, nothing less. When Elizabeth summoned me again she had the spread dried, ironed, and on the bed. Neither of us spoke for a minute; then she remarked:

"It looks exactly like a painted Indian in the room—there's not another thing that goes with it. It was too white before; now everything else is too white. What would Cousin Angela say?"

I liked the thing; the blood of my ancestors

spoke in me.

"We'll make the other stuff fit it," I said. "We've been talking of doing this room over. We'll do it in colors to match. We'll paper the walls, paint the bed and woodwork, and put in the new rug we've been wanting."

"It will probably kill Cousin Angela," said

Elizabeth.

"Well, if it shortens her visit ——" I began, but Elizabeth stopped me.

"Cousin Angela is your own blood," she said.

"You ought to be ashamed."

Elizabeth went with me to select the paper; we took the Honduras spread along. Choosing was difficult. We went to several places without finding anything that would fall in with our color scheme. When we did seem to be approaching it,

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Elizabeth remembered Cousin Angela and faltered. Finally, in desperation we groped into a grimy little place on Third Avenue. Ah, he had color schemes all right. Vivid reds and yellows and greens were his specialty. But the patterns—no, even I could not stand those. We were going, when the proprietor fished out something from a dim corner. It was a roll of paper. He flung an end of it over his exhibition easel and nobody said anything. It was unnecessary. That paper spoke for itself. It was a prairie fire; it was the Grand Cañon at sunset; it was autumn gone mad. There was no pattern. Some futurist, or post-impressionist, or cubist, or something had designed it just before he committed suicide.

"Goodness!" Elizabeth said, when she got her breath.

"It come in by mistake," said the paperman, "and I put it over there to send back. There's just about enough for your job. If you want plenty of color, there you've got it. Some colored people thought once of taking it, but changed their minds. They thought it a little strong. I'll give you a big bargain in it."

Elizabeth laid a fold of the Honduras spread across the easel. The effect was startling. They were a perfect match—anybody could see that. Something told me that we were about to become the owners of that delirium of wall color. When he quoted the price I knew it.

Third Avenue does not deliver to the suburbs.

When we left the dingy little shop I was carrying the bundle rejected by the colored builders. Wallpaper is solid stuff.

Neither of us mentioned Cousin Angela. We had, so to speak, flung prudence to the winds. We were under the spell of the Honduras spread.

"We better look for the rug now," said Eliza-

beth, rather grimly, I thought.

I did not blame her. She had always liked pretty, light, delicate things; the surrender to the barbaric was no light matter for her.

There were no rugs that went with our new ideas, but by and by, toiling up Fifth Avenue, Elizabeth caught sight of a Navajo blanket that riveted the attention of every one within three blocks.

"That is the only thing that will at all do," she said, with decision. "We've started on the road to savagery; we might as well go the full length."

So we bought the Navajo, with its thunder-and-lightning pattern, and, the Indian place being also short on delivery, we carried that, too. Next day I got a man to hang the paper and paint the wood-work and bedstead down to shades that seemed to blend with our general violence. The paperman almost balked when he found what he had got to hang. He said he had never seen anything like it. He said he couldn't seem to work out the pattern. When he had been an hour trying to match up the second strip I saw that he was

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rapidly approaching lunacy, I told him not to mind the pattern, but just to go ahead regardless, which he did. When he got through and left he was gibbering, and I fear his mind was permanently affected.

We brushed up, wiped up, and laid our Navajo floorpiece. Elizabeth made the bed and put on the Honduras cover. Then we sat down over in one corner, to take in the result. The Honduras spread was no longer conspicuous. It was, in fact, quite mild. We had conflagration in one corner, a night bombardment in another, and a war dance on the floor. We had also done something in the way of high-art ticking to the chairs. I'm partial to strong tones, as I have said, but I confess I had misgivings. Elizabeth said:

"It's so unlike what I always expected it to be. Something quite sweet and cool for summer, you

know."

"But it will be rich and warm for winter," I said, trying to defend our achievement. "And after all, this color idea is imaginary. One can be just as hot in a room all blue and white as anywhere."

"I suppose so," assented Elizabeth, "but what —oh, what do you suppose Cousin Angela will say to it? And she is likely to come any time."

"I don't care," I began, but hesitated. I have a wholesome respect for Cousin Angela, who had more than once caused me to spend money in reconstruction. "Suppose," I said, taking another

tack, "we lock this room, when Cousin Angela comes, and mislay the key. She can have my room and I'll go in on the couch in the parlor."

"I think I could never stand having her see this," said Elizabeth. "The suspense of waiting to hear her remarks—and then—oh, how could we ever have done such a thing, anyway!"

"Why, I really think it's—it's not so bad," I began, rather weakly. "It's—it's unusual and

rich and ---"

"It's certainly unusual," agreed Elizabeth, "and I might like it, too, if it were not for what people would say. I mean Cousin Angela. Her opinion of us is poor enough as it is. I can't stand it to have her think we are a pair of——"

There was a ring at the door-bell and Elizabeth went. I heard voices of greeting, and a minute later she came hurrying back, looking pretty wild.

"It's Cousin Angela!" she said. "Lock the room, quick, and lose the key! She's in the parlor—I've come to call you."

But we couldn't lock the door and lose the key, because the latter article was already lost. We made a busy search for it and tried keys from two other rooms, but with no success. Elizabeth said:

"Oh, it's no use! Let's bring her in, and take our sentence. She'd have to know sooner or later,

anyway."

I went quaking to greet my blood relative—a large, positive person—and with a show of cordiality seized her bag.

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"Come right back to your room, Cousin Angela," I said, gayly. "We have a surprise for you."

She came striding down the hall. I looked at Elizabeth. Her features were set. I could feel my heart doing queer things, and I was dragging my feet.

Cousin Angela paused on the threshold. She looked around and about, above and below, and at the bed in the center.

"When did you do all this?" she demanded, at last, and I thought I detected agitation in her usually strong voice—agitation that did not tend to improve my feelings.

"Why," I faltered, "not long ago—that is, quite recently.

Cousin took another long look. "Who directed you? I mean, where did you get the idea, and that paper?"

I looked at Elizabeth. She was quite helpless,

so I managed to go on weakly:

"We—we weren't directed. I — That is, we de—developed it, and we happened to—to find the paper. Of course, you—you may not like it, but it—it was an idea. You see — That is, of course, it grew—and—and—we—"

Cousin Angela cut in on my inanities. "Not like it! Not like it! I adore it! I think it the most wonderful thing I ever saw in my life. That spread! that paper! that color tone—the return to the primitive—it's what I've been trying to get

for months! I have a room to do for the De Puyster van Tassels, and with your permission I shall make it an exact copy of this one. You must tell me everything—where you got the spread, the wall paper, and the art ticking, the man who did the painting, and I want that exact Navajo to go with it. Tell me the whole story, right away."

I looked at Elizabeth. She had edged over near me and was leaning quite weakly on my arm.

"Oh, Cousin Angela," she said, sweetly, "we are so glad to have your favorable opinion! We had to hunt ever so hard to find just the right things, and we did so wonder what you would think of it! It's such a comfort to know that it all pleases you!"

NORTHWEST BY NORTH

AM of a roving nature and sometimes find myself in queer places. When we declared war on Germany I had just arrived in Anguilla and wanted to get away. You have never heard of Anguilla, so I will explain that it is the farthest north of the Leeward Islands and is about the only uninviting spot in the West Indies. When I add that it is practically without shade, that its population is intensively colored, and that its main crop is sweet potatoes and goats, you will begin to get the idea. By the time I discovered these things the steamer that brought me had hurried on to St. Thomas and nobody expected another for years.

The landlord of the hotel, where, so far as I could discover, I was the only guest, told me that there was a schooner down at the dock that might be going somewhere when they got her fixed up, and a trading sloop that had come in from the States a day or two before. I hurried down

there.

"Oh, the barren, barren shore!" The schooner was a drunken old thing that they thought they might get pumped out and patched up enough in about six months to get over to Charleston, and the sloop was a frowsy-looking hussy named the

Molly G., modeled after a bath-tub and similar in size.

There was a stringy-haired young fellow with a retreating chin on the Molly G. and I interviewed him. He didn't look like a sailor. He had on a fifty-cent plaid golf cap and a seven-dollar bicycle suit. I judged he was a passenger, and expected to be starting presently. That was a fair guess, but it didn't cover all the ground. I asked who was in charge of the boat.

"I am," he said, "now."

I wondered what he meant by "now," but I didn't ask.

"When does she sail," I said, "and where to?"

"Well, we want to get to Philadelphia, and we're just about to start."

I observed that he did not say they were going to Philadelphia, but only that they wanted to get there. The difference was slight, but noticeable.

"How about passengers? Got any room?"

"Oh yes, room enough—more room than anything."

"Well," I said, "I want to get to Philadelphia, too. Do I arrange with you, or the captain?"

"I'm the captain."

I probably showed surprise, for he went on

to explain.

"I guess I don't look it," he said, "and I never was a captain before, nor a sailor, neither, until this trip. I came down a passenger, for my health. The doctor thought a slow-sailin'



"MUTINY! MUTINY!" HE SHRIEKED. "NORTHWEST BY NORTH, AND LIGHTEN THE SHIP!"



NORTHWEST BY NORTH

vessel would be good for me, and I guess it has been. I stayed most of the time on deck, helpin' with the ropes. The captain let me steer, too, and explained how he worked out his navigation. Then when he got here and heard about the war he had to get back right away, as he was in the reserve, or something, so he appointed me captain and took the steamer for New York. He said just to hold the *Molly* northwest by north and pick good sailin' weather, and she'd get us somewhere, all right."

"Well," I said, "there's something in what he says; but how about your crew? You've got two

or three good sailors, I suppose."

"Two. We had three, but one went back with the captain. The two that's left are all right, though. One of 'em has been to sea before, and the other was cook on a tugboat before he came this trip. They'll be here pretty soon to load them barrels of potatoes. Then we're goin' to start. Think you'll come along?"

At first I didn't think so. I thought it better to spend the rest of my life even in blazing Anguilla than to fling it away in that careless fashion. I had to admire that young idiot's nerve, though. Why, he spoke of starting with an outfit like that on a fifteen-hundred-mile Atlantic voyage as if it were an afternoon's sail across the Delaware!

"Look here," I said. "What makes you think you'll ever get to Philadelphia?"

"Well, of course," he admitted, "we may not

hit it exactly, but if we steer northwest by north, and keep going, we'll bring up over that way somewhere, won't we? and then we can inquire, and follow the shore up or down, as the case may be. I'm a pretty good hand at findin' places, and at steerin', too. My business on land is in that line."

"What is your business on land?"

"I'm a chauffeur. I drive for Miss Susan Meacham, of Marcus Hook. It's a Ford, but the principle is the same. Miss Meacham will be expectin' me back soon. That's why I'm anxious to get off."

My impulse was to cable Miss Meacham to look out for another chauffeur, but I let it pass.

"I see," I said. "And you think by picking a nice day like this to start, and steering northwest by north for a week or two, we'll come to some place where we can inquire the way to Philadelphia."

"Why, yes. Don't you think so?"

"Well," I admitted, "the principle is sound, but there might be such a thing as a storm, you know, and if we weren't sunk we might be blown a thousand miles or so off our course, and without being able to tell where we were we might fetch up at the north pole."

"Oh, but the weather is awful nice at this season. We didn't have any trouble comin' down; and, besides, I can take latitude and longitude. The captain explained it to me and gave me a little book."

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"Ah, I see." I might have added that I had seen some nasty April storms down that way, but it didn't seem worth while.

"Do you think you want to come? I won't charge you anything if you'll give us a hand with the ropes sometimes and help with the steerin'. You could steer, I guess; it's real easy."

What a lamb he was! "A fool for luck," I

thought. My faith grew.

"Yes," I said, "I could help steer. I owned a cat-boat one summer in the Shrewsbury River. As a sailor I judge I belong about in a class with the rest of you. I'll join your asylum. When do you leave?"

"The boys are comin' now. We only have to load these barrels and have some papers signed. We'll be ready inside of an hour, and we ought

to be goin'. It's such a nice day."

The "boys" came and I took a look at them. One was a red-headed Irishman, with one eye and a limp. The other was a snubnosed, undersized nondescript, in rubber boots several sizes too big for him. We were introduced. He of the red hair was Hennessey. The other was simply "Beans." Then the chauffeur captain mentioned that his own name was Sample—Simon Sample, which inspired fresh confidence. My baggage was light. I had it aboard presently, and within the hour we were steering northwest by north, leaving the last point of solid land behind. Hennessey was at the wheel. "Beans" was in the

galley forward, cooking them. Captain Sample, "on watch," stood at the bow, his legs well apart, scanning with a two-dollar opera-glass the horizon in the direction of Philadelphia.

There was a steady breeze from the south and the Molly G. was walking away from it. During recurring moments of misgiving I wondered why I was not still ashore. Recalling the old adage, I was reassured—doubly, quadruply so; as a plain idiot Captain Sample had nothing on the rest of us. "Beans" came up by and by with the dinner and we had it on deck, taking turns at holding the Molly G. northwest by north. I have eaten better meals, but none more filling. The pudding was particularly interesting. It was made of a curious purple substance which defied analysis. We had it again for supper. Also, once more, the particular nourishment which gave "Beans" his title. Then it began to get dark and it was my turn to take the little prize-package glass and look toward Philadelphia. Again I was beset by doubts. It seemed a good deal of murky water to be at large on with such an equipment. Only the thought of our personnel gave me hope.

But perhaps all of us were not entire fools. I suspected that Hennessey was not. There was a premonition of it in a remark he made when I relieved him at the wheel.

"It's foive to wan that we'll never get the half way over," he said, "but I rayched the concloosion that it's better to be dead to wanst

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than to live with thim naygurs in that br'ilin' Anguiller."

"'Sh! Hennessy," I said. "Intelligence like that can sink us."

It was certainly fine sailing. We stood the watches two and two-Hennessey and "Beans," then Capt. Simon Sample and myself. One or two days of it would have been well enough. was well enough, anyway, except for the general uncertainty of things and the indeterminate pudding. Every day Captain Sample took observations with an old quadrant and a tin clock and arrived at something which he said was latitude and longitude, though he always seemed a good deal confused as to which was which, and decided after he had consulted a greasy map which he called a chart. Then he solemnly tacked up a paper on the mast with the result. If the tin clock could have overcome its habit of jumping half an hour every little while and of stopping betweentimes, the figures might have been more convincing. Still, I don't know; they were on a par with the rest of our outfit, and I think they impressed Hennessey. When we had been going along without a break for four days our commander informed us that we were over halfway to Philadelphia and "makin' a bee-line for Cape May." He had once driven Miss Meacham to Cape May, he said, and that if we went in close he would show where he had stopped, and we could wave as we went by. It was still just an

afternoon sail to him. He didn't know the ocean's power.

He learned it next morning. The sun came up red and drunken, the west suddenly turned black, the water took on a spectral look. Then it began to lighten and thunder, with the black all overhead now, boiling and writhing in the most dangerous-looking way. Hennessey and I got the sail down, and just then the wind turned loose with a bang that lifted us out of the ocean. In another minute the Molly G. was going through the waves like a stampeded steer, with Hennessey and "Beans" clinging to the wheel and Commander Sample and myself holding for dear life to the sail that was slapping in every direction while we tried to tie it fast. Then the thunder seemed to tear a hole in the sky. The solid rain poured through, the waves began to wash us fore and aft, and I could see where Hennessey was going to win his "foive to wan" bet if matters did not improve pretty suddenly. Perhaps they did improve a little, for we seemed to keep going, though there were moments when I could not decide whether we were on top of the sea or already under it. Simon Sample and I somehow managed to get a few ties on the big sail, but presently, when I happened to get a look at our commander, I noticed a glare in his eyes which suggested that he was laboring under strong excitement.

"We must lighten ship!" he yelled. "We

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must fling over the cargo to keep from going down!"

We were on our hands and knees, clinging to the boom. He had seized my foot and was trying to drag me toward the toy hatchway. Hennessey at the wheel yelled:

"Lave off that! Thim pertaties is all that's kapin' us from capsizin'! Ye'll be overboard in a minit yerself!"

He motioned me to the wheel with "Beans," and, making a grab at Commander Sample, steered him forcibly to the cabin, pushed him inside, shut the door and locked it.

"He's gone fair crazy!" he shouted. "I knew the first shtorm would do it to that grasshopper head of his. Shtand to, now, fer that big wan!"

I don't think we were steering northwest by north at the moment. We were going with the wind and keeping the *Molly G*. up out of the chasms as well as we could. It was not altogether a matter of direction. Suddenly the cabin window flew up and Captain Sample's head shot out.

"Mutiny! mutiny!" he shrieked. "Northwest by north, and lighten the ship!"

A paper box of crackers weighing about four ounces came sailing past us followed by a mouse-trap. They were caught by the wind and carried into the foam. There was a heavy lurch and he disappeared—the window banged down. Hennessey grinned. Five minutes later the window went up again.

"Hi, there!" cried our wild-eyed commander, "We're all right! I've saved us! I've just taken the reckoning, and we're a hundred and forty miles inland! Hurray! Hurray for the Molly G.!"

Another heavy lurch, another disappearance

with a bang.

"This bates Anguiller—sink or swim!" shouted

Hennessey.

That was positively Capt. Simon Sample's last appearance. The cabin showed no further sign. We thought he might have passed away, but there was no time to investigate. The wind now had got down to a steady gale. Our jib still held, and whatever else we were doing, we were making time. Also we had worked the Molly G. back on her course. Sometime in the afternoon I got the cabin key from Hennessey and went down to investigate. Our lightsome commander lay on the floor, groaning dismally. The malady of the sea bore heavily upon him. But he had got rid of his madness, also his fear, also of much else—oh, very much; his condition defied analysis.

For two days that was a busy ship. With a sixty-mile gale behind us and our rag of a jib flying we made a record for the Molly G. "Beans" dug up what he could from the galley in the way of sustenance—cold potatoes, purple pudding, hunks of biscuit. Captain Sample was not visible. He had managed to make his bunk, and remained there. We somehow worried along without the

reckoning.

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But on the third night the wind went down. By morning the sea was learning to behave, the sun came up bright. Hennessey was steering and "Beans" and I hoisting the mainsail when the cabin door opened and Capt. Simon Sample, carefully dressed in his seven-dollar suit and plaid cap, stepped on deck, carrying his dinky opera-glass. He bade us good morning as cheerfully as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened. Then he swept the horizon in the direction of Philadelphia. A moment later he turned gleefully.

"Land!" he called. "Right over there, just as I expected. I'll bet two dollars it's Cape May!"

Land it certainly was. We could all see it now, even without the glass. By and by we could see the houses. Captain Sample scrutinized them with his glass.

"Summer cottages," he said; "most of 'em unoccupied yet, but I guess we'll find somebody to ask."

We ran close inland. He noticed what appeared to be a fisherman's cottage in a small inlet. A landing-dock ran out into the water and there were some boats tied.

"Those people are at home, all right," he said. "Pull in there, Hennessey, and I'll inquire."

Hennessey rounded to the dock. Simon Sample stepped out and ran up to the house. Presently a woman came out and they talked and pointed. Captain Sample came running back.

"We're all right," he said. "Straight ahead and first turn to the right. That will bring us

right around Cape May. I'm first rate at findin'

places."

He might have been out with Miss Meacham in the Ford. "Beans" brought up some hot coffee and fried salt pork. Capt. Simon Sample was in

high feather.

"I tell you there's nothin' like understandin' navigation," he said. "If Miss Meacham will let me off, I think I'll take it up altogether. How about the navy, eh? I'll bet when the government hears about this trip they'll offer me command of a cruiser, or somethin'. Run in close, Hennessey, an' I'll show you boys where I stayed last summer."

The red-headed Irishman and I grinned at each

other.

"We need not have been the least alarmed, Hennessey," I said. "With a man of Captain Sample's caliber aboard we've been in perfectly safe hands all the time."

THE GREAT ROUNDTOP VEGETABLE DRIVE

THIS happened during the fever of the late war. I didn't suppose there ever would come a time when one could speak of it as the "late war," but, lo! it is here! That war was geared to run forever, some thought. That was the general opinion—at least, in Roundtop.

But I am not getting started well. The thing on my mind is gardens—war gardens—war gardens in Roundtop. Everybody was going to have one. Every family in town, early in the spring, commenced laying out the whole of their back yards, turning the sod under, and their flower beds. Some laid out their front yards as well, and a good many of them put up signs which said that vegetables would win the war, and that every row of corn was a front-line trench, and that every tomato was a bomb for liberty, and a lot more such stirring sentiments.

I have said every family in town, but there was one exception—it was in our neighborhood. We caught the notion, too, at first—Elizabeth rather alarmingly; I not so hard. I had gardened a good deal, as a boy. I had often done it on a Saturday when I knew that a baseball game was going on down back of the Campbellite church,

and that some one-gallused, unattached boy was taking my place as shortstop. The weather at such times was hot—entirely too hot for hoeing weeds and hilling up corn—and as I bent over the row, with the sweat getting into my eyes and trickling down my nose, and thought of those other fellows tearing around to make third base and sliding in on the home plate, I had acquired a permanent distaste for a hoe and related implements.

Moreover, our back yard at Roundtop was peculiar. It was a particularly open space at the south end of the house, which was a dazzling white as to color. On a mid-July day we had no real need of a gas range. Elizabeth declared that a steak set out on the back stoop would have to be watched to keep it from getting overdone. When I contemplated that bit of soil, even on a mellow afternoon in April, and reflected what it would be on, say, Independence Day when a patriot would naturally be engaged there, I had a return of what, on those old Saturday afternoons, I used to describe to my mother as a "kind of dizzy spell," which sometimes got me excused for the rest of the day. Corn would thrive in the fierce glow of that little sun-smitten square, no doubt-also other things-but something told me that one of my temperament would wilt under it. I was wilting already. I went around to the shady front stoop to consider.

Tom McNaughten came along. McNaughten



SOME RUMOR HAD COME TO HIM OF MY DECLINING HEALTH AND HE HAD COME TO SEE ABOUT IT



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was very strong for war gardens. He had not only a back yard, but a vacant lot which he was getting into shape to put into potatoes. He

stopped, of course.

"Well," he said, "I suppose you are going to be digging up that little old farm of yours pretty soon, now. I was looking at it yesterday. Great place for beans and corn and things that want lots of sun. Better than anything I've got. I tell you we're up against it. We old boys will have to hoe to hustle the Hun, eh? You'll be on the job, of course."

I sighed, and allowed my hand to steal unconsciously in the direction of my heart.

"I hope so," I said, feebly. "I've been planning for it, but I've not been as well as I would like this spring, and I may not be able to undertake it. The sun seems to affect my circulation or something. Just now I was out there and, pleasant as the day is, I had a sensation that made me want to sit here in the shade. I had something of that sort as a child. It's too bad—it will be such a disappointment—especially to Elizabeth, who has been counting on saving a good deal in green stuff to help out with her Assyrian fund."

McNaughten was sympathetic—he is the best soul in the world. He said that, after all, my ground was really too small to make any material difference, and that if I was affected by the sun in that way it was not worth while to take a dangerous risk for a few vegetables. He would

send me some of his. I felt traceably guilty until Carruthers and Blake and Walker and some seven or eight others had come along and talked war garden to me, and I had told the same story to each of them. I believed it myself, by that time, and most of the guilt had worn off. It seemed to me that I really did feel a little dizzy at moments, and that my heart was not behaving as well as it should. We had good neighbors—the best ever—and they all, to a man, sympathized and promised to send vegetables. I could see that it was going to give them a real pleasure to bring us things from their gardens, and I was willing to gratify them in that simple way.

It was not so easy to convince Elizabeth. When I referred to my condition she said she hadn't noticed anything different about me lately, except that my appetite was rather better than usual, but that of course if the sun was going to prostrate me she could probably attend to the hoeing herself, along with her housekeeping, her Red Cross work, her Assyrian fund, and a few other things. I had to argue pretty strenuously that there was going to be more stuff in our neighbors' gardens, anyway, than they could possibly use, and that it would be wrong to take her time from those more important duties. Perhaps I ought to add that in a former day we had kept a domestic assistant, but had parted with her one morning when she had been offered as much per week to conduct a trolley car as we had been able

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to pay her per month to administer our quiet household. Since then Elizabeth had added certain home activities to her war work—not with entire success, I may say, though I did not often mention this, being patriotic, and Elizabeth somewhat forceful. She expressed doubts, now, in her customary positive way, as to the promised vegetable supply, but for once she was mistaken. Oh, entirely so—as you shall see!

You will remember that last summer was what farmers call a "growing" season—at least, for most things. War gardens flourished. Men like Tom McNaughten, who had never known the joys of gardening in early life and could hardly tell green beans from turnips until they were on the table, pretty soon went swelling around with bunches of radishes and heads of lettuce, talking about Hale's Early and Boston Curly and a lot of other varieties, in a way that would make you think they were canvassing for a seed house. You never saw such a vain, set-up lot. They worked on those gardens nights and holidays and Sundays and really pretended to enjoy it. Their cars stood in the garage. The golf course was deserted. They hailed the new daylight-saving idea as a boon.

Then they began to bring us things. They wanted to show off, of course, but they were good souls, too, and trusting. Word had gone around that I was not what you would call well; that I had dizzy spells—was almost an invalid, also greatly depressed because my doctor would not

permit me to make a war garden. Some said I was going into a decline.

We got the earliest and choicest things. McNaughten and Carruthers and Bliss and Blake and a lot more brought us dripping, dewy radishes and tender young lettuce before they had enough for themselves, and always the best selections. We begged them not to rob themselves in that way, which only seemed to stimulate them to further extravagance.

You never saw anything like it. It became a regular competition. In the morning before we were up those war gardeners would come, and on our opening the front door we would find a heap of bunches and bundles with their cards attached. They generally had something written on themsomething spirited and patriotic. On a bunch of onions, for instance, "How will these British Beauties do to keep the Hun traveling?" Or on a basket of lettuce, "Just a sample of Canadian Crimpy to put a crimp in the Kaiser." Then there were names like "Belgian Yellow" and "Japanese Prolific" and "American Wonder" and Champion of Italy" for the various beans and peas and cucumbers that they unloaded at our threshold. All the Allies were represented there, and recommended to do things to the enemy's front-line trench.

They did something to our front-line trench. They filled it up full. We could not begin to eat all that produce. We thought there would be a

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falling off presently, but that was poor judgment. As the season advanced the supply increased, doubled, and trebled. After the first offerings of radishes and lettuce and onions and such early things came beans and tomatoes and Swiss chard.

The Swiss are a good people—I admire them exceedingly—but they should not have invented chard. And just why our neighbors all went into it so frantically I fail to see. Now and then there would be a shortage of other things, but there was always a redundance of Swiss chard. I have heard that it is healthy; perhaps they thought it would be good for my mysterious ailment. No doubt they meant well, and I am still grateful for their attention, but in time I reached a point where I could not even look upon Swiss chard and feel entirely well. My biting into a boiled grasshopper cunningly concealed between two leaves of it may have had something to do with this-Elizabeth, I fear, being not always sufficiently deliberate in preparing our food. I have heard that there are Indians who eat grasshoppers and like them. I think it improbable.

I tried to adjust matters somewhat. I got up early, and when a friend came with chard I sought to persuade him to give it to some one down the street and leave me something else—say cantaloupes. I tried to find somebody who did not raise chard, so I could trade him our accumulation of it for early apples, or raspberries. But that was a failure. I succeeded in swapping a peck of toma-

toes to Walker for a dozen Golden Bantam corn, but when I mentioned a possible deal in Swiss chard he changed the subject.

Still, it did not really matter. By the middle of July there wasn't a thing we needed to trade for. We had everything. Our kitchen looked like a green-grocer's shop, and every morning found a fresh pile on the front stoop. We even tried to stem the flood, politely, of course. We put out a neat card with such hints as "Plenty of corn to-day, thanks," or "Chard enough for a while," "No more summer squashes till further notice," and the like. But it was no use. They thought it mere delicacy on our part, and heaped the pile higher. We finally set out a box for contributions. The heap was too conspicuous.

One day my uncle Lemuel called. Uncle Lemuel has a farm a few miles out, and does a good deal in the way of market gardening. Some rumor had come to him of my declining health, and he had called to see about it. had also brought a few choice things from his

garden.

I took Uncle Lemuel aside and carefully explained matters. He seemed interested—even amused. I led him to the kitchen and showed him what had happened. He said, "Gewhillikins! -don't it beat all?" Then he thoughtfully looked over our stock and appraised it.

"That's all good truck," he said. "I can sell

every mite of it."

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"For goodness' sake, do it!" I said. "Take it away—all of it. We've nearly killed ourselves trying to eat it up."

"Does it come reg'lar?" asked Uncle Lemuel.

"It does. In a day or two we'll have as much more. You can make a drive on it."

"I'll drive in every second day and clean you out," said Uncle Lemuel.

"But that wouldn't be right," objected Elizabeth, who arrived at the moment.

"'Tain't right to let it spile," said Uncle Lemuel.

I had a bright thought—the first one in some time.

"Elizabeth," I said, "you can put the proceeds into your Assyrian fund."

That is Elizabeth's pet fund. Getting money for the Red Cross is easy enough. But Assyria is a good way off. Most of us think of the Assyrians as a people who once, in a bygone age, "came down like a wolf on the fold" in purple and golden raiment. Contributors to the fund were scarce and economical. Elizabeth wavered, and fell. Uncle Lemuel carried the stuff out the back way, and some hours later reported with seven dollars. He had even disposed of our half a ton of Swiss chard.

Uncle Lemuel came again Saturday, and again Tuesday. It was the height of the season, now, and the supply was growing steadily. I had to put out a bigger box, and I began to attach a card of fulsome appreciation. That opened up things in

earnest. When I wrote on it, "Great corn, Mc.," or, "Prize cucumbers, Fred," and added, "Food for the gods," or some pleasant thing like that, the others fairly laid themselves out to go one or two better in size and quality. Cantaloupes and carrots, potatoes and tomatoes, beans world without end—our front stoop in the morning looked like a prize display at a country fair. Uncle Lemuel came "reg'lar," and said that, with his own truck and ours, he guessed he'd have to get a bigger wagon. Elizabeth's Assyrian fund was piling up, and if her conscience pricked her now and then, the thought that she was suffering in a good cause consoled her. Also the size of the accumulation.

Now and then, when I saw McNaughten and Bliss and Blake and the others, I told them how much the open-air exercise agreed with them. Sometimes I dropped around where they were digging away and offered a few encouraging words. At such times I spoke of the wonderful quality of their produce which I declared was certainly going far toward restoring my own health. They could see for themselves that I was getting fat. Anybody would get fat on a fancy vegetable diet like that. Next year, I said, I might be equal to a garden of my own. They were proud and patronizing, and said they would furnish me with seeds and advice, and that if I broke down under the strain of keeping up with my garden they would come over and hoe it for me. They were certainly

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good fellows. I did not tell them—not yet—that I had already almost broken down under the

strain of trying to keep up with theirs.

Through August and September the run continued. Then the fall things came—big pumpkins rolled in, prize cabbages and turnips. Uncle Lemuel, good soul, did a land-office business for Elizabeth's Assyrian fund—sometimes, I fear, at the expense of his own. But then came November, and the garden season waned. A day arrived when the daily supply was within our capabilities. Elizabeth said:

"Now we've got to tell those people."

That was difficult—delicate, I mean. One

couldn't think of just the best way.

Fate provided it. Just at that critical time the war ended. The war gardens had won out. Perhaps a few other things had contributed, but we knew that McNaughten and Blake and Bliss and Carruthers would be strong on the garden feature. Elizabeth said that now she would get in some emergency help and have them and their wives to dinner. We did that, and when all were assembled at the table and had refreshed themselves with a round of-of grapejuice-and were about to launch into general garden and war talk, Elizabeth announced, quite gravely, that before we went any further she wished to return heartfelt gratitude for their combined contribution to her Assyrian fund. That produced an immediate and profound silence. You can readily see that it

would be so. They looked at Elizabeth, and they looked at me, searchingly.

So then it was my turn, and I confessed, quite fully. Never mind the details, but I closed by producing Uncle Lemuel's somewhat picturesque, but accurate, account of sales, and displayed the same with its footings "fer the hull season"—a sum total of two hundred and eleven dollars and sixteen cents.

Whereupon our guests rose as one and denounced me. They declared that I had quite fully established myself as a person unreliable as to statement, unscrupulous as to performance, and wholly without shame. Nevertheless, in the end they forgave me, for they are good neighbors—the very best, as I have stated.

Something tells me, however, that the next time there is a hurry call for gardeners I shall be among those present.

RESERVED SEATS

WHEN we agreed on a period of city residence I said that what we needed was a quiet furnished apartment, centrally located, with large rooms and not too expensive—a floor in an old-fashioned house preferred. I wanted to be near where things were going on, and a good deal of uninterruption and plenty of space were desirable things. I may repeat that the matter of price was rather important. Elizabeth remarked in her casual way that from the specifications heaven was probably our home, as it seemed unlikely that we should find those things elsewhere.

She was mistaken, however. Through a line discovered by careful search in the Sunday Times I found the very thing. The "Attractive furnished apartment to sublet cheap" proved to be on lower Fifth Avenue, in an old brownstone front. Once a mansion, it was now "Floors to let." Ours was the third one, with big rooms just far enough above the street to make the murmur of rubber tires and asphalt rather soothing, and the occasional honk, honk a pleasant variation. A man who had leased it for a term of years, at the old rate, had business elsewhere, he said, now that the war was over, and was willing to sublet without increase of price. Then he called attention to the fact that

the three large front windows commanded a fine view of the street, and that on Fifth Avenue one got everything that was going. He said it was a wonderful place to see the parades. If there was anything to give one pause in the tempo of that observation, I did not notice it. I remembered it afterward merely as a pleasant remark, and so did Elizabeth. It was Elizabeth, in fact, who added that it would be nice to invite in friends for such occasions, to which he made no response -very likely a rather selfish person, as we thought, who had not cared to share his windows. It was generous in him to be willing to let the place go at the price, though. Elizabeth admitted that it was a find, and that I had been wonderfully smart to locate it. Then we moved in.

I have never known anything more satisfactory than it all was when we were really settled. The open fire in the big front room, the solid and comfortable old furnishings, with our own personal belongings, the quiet rumble of the passing show, always so interesting day or night, to look out upon.

That was just when our victorious armies were coming back from France, to pass before the throng in bannered review. When we read that the gallant Steenty-eight had landed and were going to parade from Washington Square to the frontiers of Harlem, with martial bands and all the trappings of war, we were deeply stirred by the prospect. No more standing on a cold curb

WE GOT UP FAIRLY EARLY AND MADE THE SANDWICHES



RESERVED SEATS

for hours, mashed and trodden by the medleyed throng; no more ruinous prices for windy seats in some rickety grand stand. We would merely draw up nice, comfortable chairs to our spacious windows, and from the comfort of their deep luxury see everything, as it were, from our own fireside. We would invite in a few less privileged friends to share our monopoly. We wanted to be generous. Also, we wanted them to see how fortunate we were. We knew some fellows in that regiment—we would ask their relatives. Elizabeth said it would be proper to serve a few refreshments. It was all going to be lovely, she said.

It was; there wasn't a single hitch in the program. Our maid wanted the day off, so we got up fairly early, made the sandwiches and things ourselves, and I went down to a near-by hostelry and acquired a bottle or two of certain liquids that have become noticeably more expensive since the "July 1st" order appeared on the horizon. Then we carried in the dining-room table and arranged everything on it, where it would be handy for our guests to help themselves at will. There was a free-and-easy atmosphere about the arrangement that we thought went well with patriotic spirit.

If ever a party was a success ours was. Not one of our guests failed us. Indeed, they multiplied somewhat, for most of them had friends with boys in the parade, and some of our invitees telephoned for permission to bring the said friends

along. Others brought them without taking time to telephone, knowing it would be all right, as they explained, and of course it was, everything being free and easy and patriotic on such a day. Also, there were quite a number who did not seem to have been invited by any of those present and who appeared surprised to find us there. These as we gathered, had been friends of our predecessor, and we revised our opinions of his generosity, while we made his former guests welcome.

So you see we had really quite an imposing assemblage by parade-time. Elizabeth went out hastily and carved a good many more sandwiches, while I slipped down for a reserve supply of those enhanced bottles, and we both felt quite elated in the thought that we were doing something fine and substantial in the grand cause of "Welcome Home," which was the legend on the banner suspended from our window.

As I say, there wasn't a halt or a hitch anywhere. It was a bright, brisk morning. The parade started with military promptness. There burst forth a splendid blast of music from down the Avenue and then presently the mounted police came riding ahead, the serried ranks of our brave defenders behind them, their steel helmets glancing in the sun.

We threw up the windows and leaned out to cheer—that is, our guests did. Elizabeth and I were not near enough for that, though we managed to get a glimpse, now and then, over the

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shoulders of those who had relatives in the parade and were of course entitled to the choicest positions. It was all very stirring and splendid, and with every detachment that passed our cheers and tears and patriotism welled up, and from time to time had to be washed down, and nourished with relays of sandwiches, as the hours sped and the ranks went marching by. Elizabeth and I really got a pretty fair view at these intervals, though I do not remember that we ever enjoyed the luxury of the comfortable chairs, in the way we had anticipated.

But we did honestly enjoy the pleasure of our guests. They all said it was just grand to see the parade in that way. Our three big windows were like private boxes at the opera, they said, only ever so much better, because of our refreshments. Those refreshments were certainly popular. Our friends had all eaten early breakfasts and the brisk air blowing in sharpened their appetites. There were always from four to seven around the table, and sometimes as many as eleven. Those were the times when Elizabeth and I got our best views of that parade.

I began to get anxious for that procession to end. I was afraid our refreshments wouldn't hold out—especially the liquid things. I had never seen patriotism flow so. It was really beautiful. Elizabeth slipped back into the kitchen and sliced up everything she could find, and I produced some odds and ends of a special reserve stock that the

July order had sent up to four-fifty per. When the last gallant doughboy swung by, and the last faint music died in the northern distance those present made a final raid on the lunch counter and three minutes later there wasn't a thing discoverable in the way of solids, nor enough liquid corruption in the bottles to disturb your grandmother.

It had been a most pleasant occasion—everybody said so. Our guests went away, gratefully declaring that they would never forget us, and that they hoped they would never miss a parade again as long as we were in that neighborhood, and we said that of course they mustn't. Then we carried all the empty things back into the kitchen and the table back into the dining room, and opened up the house to let out the smoke, and by and by sat down to get our breath a little and remark how great it had all been. And by and by Elizabeth observed, in her casual way, that no less than a hundred and fifty quite hearty sandwiches and a box of cigars and some five bottles of rather expensive fluids had disappeared during the occupation, and that she supposed if we entertained a parade like that as often as once a month our rent wouldn't really be so cheap, after all.

Once a month! Ah, me! There were four parades that month, and seven the next!

We didn't miss one of them. There was the return of the Stoonty-unth, and St. Patrick's, and the naval boys, and the Darktown Brigade, and—

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Oh, well, never mind the rest. You read about them at the time, and saw their pictures in the Sunday papers. But we entertained them—that is, we entertained their friends—all of them, unless there is a mistake in my figures. That little initial affair was a mere first ripple of the rising tide. The next fête-day brought all those dear people back again, and all their friends with them. Again we prepared generously and again they swept us clean and departed, heaping blessings upon us. The third time we elongated our table to its fullest extent, piled it high and heaped up great reserves in the kitchen. Our pride was at stake now; we could not afford to weaken. Once more the hearty grasp of greeting-the backwash of gratitude at the end. Our regular attendance voted us public benefactors, and we began to feel like it. When the fourth and fifth processions had come and passed, and the sixth was in the near imminence, I confided to Elizabeth that I could see where it was going to be necessary to sell our Liberty Bonds if this thing went on. Elizabeth asked, rather pointedly, if I still considered the apartment secluded, and a bargain as to price. Inasmuch as it was Elizabeth herself who had suggested the idea of guests and refreshments, it seemed to me this remark did not partake of her usual good taste.

Of course we no longer, either of us, saw anything of the parades. It was only because of the constant shuttle process between the refreshment

table and the windows that even our friends could be fairly successful in that line. The attendance was too great for any large percentage of it to see at one time. As I say, we saw nothing. It was our job to provide sustenance for those present. We heard the bands, though, and the stirring music inspired us to renewed efforts.

I know now what it is to run a lunch counter. We got it down to a system. When a parade was due we put in the day before sawing bread and ham, and putting away our fragile articles of furniture. At odd times during the week I cruised among the lower currents of trade, hunting bargain sales of wet goods, which daily became fewer and offered less attractive "specials." We never feared that we should provide an oversupply. Rain or shine, our patronage did not fail. Our friends, and our friends' friends, and the friends of our friends' friends came in force, and they came early. I am not sure that some of them did not come for breakfast, for they asked if we had coffee. Long before the first blare of the trumpets from Washington Square there was standing-room only, and as the shouts of the multitudes floated in, and the music of the recurrent bands, our windows bravely showed their rosettes of beaming faces and waving handkerchiefs while the home-coming veterans swung past.

It's a long way to Tipperary—It's a long way to go;

came throbbing in until I sometimes wondered

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what the mileage really was to Tipperary, and if we were ever going to get there.

Still, it was all stirring and rejoiceful, and I recall those weeks now with pride. I said if we got through it alive, and solvent, it would be something to remember, and it is. As I look back on that time now it seems to me one vast tide of tumult—of brass bands and shouting, of hilarity and ham sandwiches. Such an experience cannot happen twice—not to us.

It was the "Big Parade" at the end of March that closed our engagement as Relief Committee to an Observation Post. Nothing like that parade was ever seen before, either in or out of our quiet apartment. We knew what was coming. Elizabeth and our assistant worked for two days getting ready for the drive, and on the great morning when I went down-stairs on an early errand our outside steps were already filled with our customers, waiting for us to open. They were certainly faithful.

An hour later, when our rooms were pretty solidly packed, and the parade was about to begin, Elizabeth and I slipped quietly down the back stairs, worked our way around to the front, and climbed into two grandstand seats, previously reserved at considerable expense. There on that glorious day we sat undisturbed for three mortal hours—no, immortal, I mean, for the memory of them will not pass—and watched the boys march by. And when the last rank of shining helmets,

and the wreaths for the sacred dead, and the last automobile of the honored wounded had been welcomed with cheers and tears and waving, we slipped back to find, as I expected, that we had not been missed by our company.

And when the final grateful guest had eaten the remainder of a damaged sandwich and rinsed out a trickling drainage of VOP and gone happily his way, I said to Elizabeth, without emotion:

"How would it be to put a line in the Sunday Times?"

She did not ask me what for, but in her casual way observed:

"It might be a good idea. It worked before—on us."

"If it brings results we could go away for a while—I have just about enough left for that—to some place where it is quiet—where we could rest, I mean, and decide what we want to do next."

We then set to work straightening up our apartment, which looked as if it had been sublet for a county fair.

On Monday morning a pleasant old gentleman appeared with a copy of the *Times* advertising section.

"Is this your offer: 'An attractive furnished apartment, cheap?'" he asked.

I said it was.

"And is this the apartment?"

"It is," I said, and led him to the windows that looked down on the passing show. "You notice,"

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I went on, "it commands a fine view of the street, and on Fifth Avenue one gets everything that is going. It is really a wonderful place to see the parades."

His face brightened. If there was anything in my observation to give him pause, he apparently hadn't noticed it.

"Why, yes," he said, "and one could invite in a few friends."

I made no response to this remark, and he probably thought us rather selfish people who had not cared to share their windows.

That was barely two months ago. There have been only eight parades since then, but this morning when I opened the Sunday *Times* I read under the proper heading:

"An attractive furnished apartment, on lower

Fifth Avenue, to sublet, cheap."

It is really a delightful old place, and it is cheap. I hope he will find a tenant—some one who will take up the good work that we, or our predecessor, began, and carry it on worthily, as long as—well, as long as he is able.

GETTING SQUARE WITH THE LAUNDRY

"HELL'S bells!" is my favorite swear word. I don't consider it so very wicked—I don't think it means much of anything. I never heard of any bells in that particular place, and if there are any it can do no harm to mention them occasionally, under sudden and trying circumstances.

I did so, quite sharply, when not so long ago I observed among my freshly laundered shirts, neatly piled upon my bed, a garment that manifestly was not my own. It was the second time this thing had happened, and the first experience still rankled. The laundry had refused to redeem that errant garment—to recognize any mistake—had insisted that there could be none, that the shirt was certainly mine, even though clearly built for a smaller man. I tried it, repeatedly, nearly choking myself in the attempt to get even, finally working it off on the janitor.

In the present instance I gradually became calmer. Even the briefest examination showed it to be a shirt of excellent quality, correct as to measurements and captivating as to pattern—captivating from my standpoint, I mean. I like shirts to have a good deal of the cosmic urge in them, that gripping quality so often referred to in publishers' advertisements. I saw at once that

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this shirt had it—that to engage with a shirt like that would be to give life, at once, quite a new and wonderful definition.

"H—— b——!" I said again, as I checked off its good points, "I'll wear it—I'll wear it now! I'll get even with that bandit, for once."

It certainly was becoming to my style of beauty. When I was enclosed in its rather violent, almost ethiopian, parallels I had a moment of misgiving. Being a commuter, I rode down each morning with many. Suppose some co-traveler should identify his property: it would be inconvenient, even humiliating, to surrender it on the train. Oh, well, there must be more than one of those masterpieces; I would put up a bold front—shirt front—if one were degenerate enough to make puns. I slipped out, calling good-by to Elizabeth, who was occupied with the dumbwaiter. Something told me to do this.

Nothing happened on the train—not a thing.

It was different, however, at the office. Being July weather, we were stripped for action, and the boys gathered around to admire me. One said, "It's a hummer!" Yet another said, "Hummer nothing! It's an anvil chorus!" and wanted to know how I expected to be able to sleep in the same room with it. Hammond, in his customary disagreeable way, asked if generally I did my shopping along upper Lenox Avenue.

I was not disturbed by these feeble and ancient jokes. I have the courage of my color schemes,

even of borrowed plumage, though I may have been a trifle spasmodic in flaunting it; for in a moment of testing my fountain pen, to see if it had ink in it, I found that it had—a good deal of it—most of which landed on my new possession, a bit above the waist line.

The reader will discover nothing amusing in this misfortune, but those imbeciles did, and became less considerate in their remarks, the latter quite too silly to repeat, or even to remember. At the end of a loathsome day I went home gloomily—to face a situation.

Elizabeth met me at the door, with no welcomehome expression, her eye nailed to that shirt.

"How in the name of goodness did you come

to put that thing on?" she demanded.

"Why—why—" I began, "Why—" and then I seemed to be unable to remember any good reason for putting on that particular shirt on that particular morning. "Why—why—hell's bells!" I wound up weakly, "what's the matter?"

"Matter! Why, the laundry boy has been here three times after it. He brought your shirt and said he must have the one left by mistake. I told him I cound not find it. He is coming again,

now, any time."

"Well," I said bitterly, "he carefully failed to make any such manifestation before, when he carried off a perfectly good shirt of mine, in exchange for a miniature mockery about big enough for a chimpanzee. How did I know

GETTING SQUARE WITH THE LAUNDRY

he would want this one any more than the other?"

"Well, he does," urged Elizabeth, "and he's

going to call for it, very soon."

"It will be necessary for him to call again," I said feebly; "it's in no condition to deliver, I have worn it the space of a long, limp July day; and besides, I squirted my fountain pen on it—quite copiously."

Elizabeth glared at me as I opened my coat

to expose the disaster.

"Heavens!" she moaned "What shall we do now?"

"Yes," I admitted, "it's something to be thought out."

Elizabeth regarded me accusingly.

"You never got ink on one of your shirts before," she observed, apparently with a growing suspicion that for some unworthy motive I had done it this time purposely. The doorbell rang—she jumped, quite smartly. "There he is, now. What shall I tell him?"

I am rather quick in moments of danger—accustomed to driving in close traffic, at it were.

"Tell him I have been called away—sent for; that I may be back soon, but that my things are locked up—he must await my return. It will give us time—that's what we need, now."

I retreated, and presently heard the alternate voices of Elizabeth and the laundry boy. They seemed to be discussing something. I was not

interested to the point even of asking her later how she modified and adapted my invention to suit her emergencies. I merely said, when she

sought me out:

"They have stuff to remove ink. I will get a pound of it and work out my salvation. I will eradicate that spot from my life. Then we will send this calamity to Sam Lee's short-order laundry, and have it for that pestiferous youth when he comes again."

I did not sleep on this decision. I am prompt about such matters. I went immediately to the pharmacy and cornered the supply of Ink-out, and, after a somewhat anxious and hasty supper, set to work on my expiation.

I did not know before that an electric bulb can furnish so much heat. But on a July night, in a still bathroom, it can become positively criminal in its energy. I scrubbed and rinsed; I perspired till my eyes were full, and the fluid of life dripped down, and perhaps helped a little, for the ink really seemed to come out, in astonishing quantities. Elizabeth sat outside on the balcony, and looked at the stars, and occasionally called through the window that there was a nice little breeze out there, and to ask how I was getting on.

"It's coming out in quarts," I told her. "I'm

getting quite interested and cheered over it."

Then suddenly, I suppose, she must have heard my favorite words, for she said:

"What's the matter? What's happened?"

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I tried to be calm.

"Oh, nothing," I said, "nothing much. I've rubbed a hole in the Liberian flag—that's all!"

She came in then.

"I thought you might do that," she said, reflectively.



"IT'S COMING OUT IN QUARTS"

"Oh, you did! You thought I might do that! Well, why didn't you say so?"

She became considerate.

"It's not a very big hole," she said, "just kind of long, like; and I think the stain will wash out,

now, with a little salt, or milk, or something. And maybe I can carefully draw the edges together. It seems really very warm in here."

I suppose it was my appearance that made her kind. I was a rag—a rag that has been wrung

out.

"Angels could do no more," I said. "Let me

get into this tub, and go to bed."

Our shirt — I call it "our," for it now became that—was somewhat less promising by daylight. Zones of its glory seemed to have paled with the action of the Ink-out, and there was an area of general vagueness around the former field of offense. Likewise, a very definite rift where I had been a thought too intense in my treatment. There were even other places which might also be termed threadbare. Elizabeth said, regarding it doubtfully:

"Don't you think you'd better leave the office an hour earlier and try to find a new one like it. Sam Lee can do it up, so it won't look entirely new. They must carry such things as this in those shops along upper Seventh or Lenox, above 135th Street. Very likely it's a favorite pattern. You can remember it, can't you?"

Remember it! I couldn't forget it if I tried. She called after me cheerfully that she was sure I could find it.

But Elizabeth was a poor guesser. I left the office even two hours earlier, and put in a season of fearful agony—the hottest hours of a July after-

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noon—in the shops of that carefree district that now embraces upper Seventh and Lenox Avenues and is extending in dusky fingers down the side streets. Polite clerks of both sexes exposed to me their choicest selections, but all to no purpose. They had nothing drastic enough—violent enough—to fit my case. One polite young female, of the gold-rimmed variety, after declaring that she had nothing so pronounced as I seemed to require, suggested that I try Broadway.

I caught my train at 125th Street, and tried to forget care in the evening comics and scandals. Elizabeth met me at the door, unduly radiant, I

thought, under the circumstances.

"No," I said, "I could not find it. They have nothing so fierce in stock."

Elizabeth looked rejoiceful.

"I'm so glad," she bubbled, "for I fixed it this morning, and took it right to Sam Lee, with a hurry-up order, and it's just come home. You never could find the place, if you didn't examine

closely. It's quite wonderful, really!"

She was right: Elizabeth and Sam together had certainly worked a miracle. But then I happened to discover something—something to give one pause—an unmistakable Chinese identification mark on the inside of the neckband; not just a mark, either, but an inscription: three beautifully wrought ideographic characters, probably to convey "Wantee dam quickee!" or some such urgent order.

"Elizabeth," I groaned, "the owner of this thing will see that it had been worn and washed. He will find out from the laundry boy my shame, and probably charge me with it publicly, some morning on the train. I can never live it downnever!"

Elizabeth was startled, but she said:

"I don't believe men look on the inside of their neckbands. Besides, he may think they have a Chinaman, now, in our laundry, or something. Anyway, we're not going to care what he thinks. We're going to get rid of it."

That is Elizabeth's way, when she really takes a thing in hand. We did get rid of it—on the spot, so to speak—for the laundry boy rang the bell just then, and Elizabeth, hastily wrapping up our shirt, handed it to him, with her most winning smile. . . . One hour later the bell rang again. Something in the clang of it moved me almost to tears.

"It's that accursed shirt!" I wailed, sweating ice water. "Also, probably, its owner."

It was the shirt, all right, but not the owner. It was the laundry boy, and he was grinning.

"That ain't the lost shirt, at all," he said. "The boss says he never saw that shirt before, and that it must be one of your own, and that it's been to the Chinee, 'cause it's got his mark on it. Says you might-a got it from there."

"But did you show it to the gentleman who has lost a shirt?" This from Elizabeth, quite severely.

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"Yes, mam, an' he said ---"

The creature hesitated and began grinning again, in a quite idiotic way.

"Yes, well, what did he say?"

"Why, he said—he said that as fur as he was concerned you could keep it—that he wouldn't wear it to a dog fight."

But I could not permit this to go on.

"Oh, he wouldn't," I interrupted, quite haughtily; "he wouldn't wear it to a dog fight! Well, you present my compliments to the gentleman, and tell him that—hell's bells!—we don't attend dog fights. Just like that!"

SUNDAY-MORNING RECREATION

ELIZABETH said: "Where are those glasses?"

I looked at her anxiously.

"Didn't I give them to you?"

"No," she said, with some positiveness, "you probably left them when you went out for a cigar. You'd better go find them at once. We'll neither of us be able to read the Sunday paper, if you don't."

Elizabeth has a way of knowing her facts, and I was up and started before she finished. The matter was important. I had smashed my glasses the night before, at the theater. I had not only dropped them, but stepped on them. No optician was open Sunday, of course, so I had persuaded Elizabeth to share hers with me, for the day. At the moment we were breakfasting at the Grand Central Station, and our train for the suburb would leave in something like an hour. We had finished breakfast, and I was smoking. Elizabeth had decided to appropriate this as her period for perusal of the Sunday paper. Hence you will see that the matter was not only important, but urgent.

When I got to the cigar stand the girl said she had seen no glasses, simultaneously talking to

two other customers and making change with a third. I wanted to discuss the matter, but the interview was closed, so far as she was concerned. I had a sinking feeling. Could I have left them in the room at the hotel? I remembered using them there. The hotel was distant—it would require considerable activity, even with a taxi, to get there and back before the train left, and it would be another hour before the next one.

Suddenly I remembered the news-stand—most likely I had left them there. But the girl who sold the papers, though more open to reason then the cigar girl, could not be persuaded to produce the missing article. She looked between her piles of papers, and agreed that somebody might have picked them up; also she expressed herself as being sorry and hoped I'd find them. She even started to tell me of an occasion when she had lost something or other, but I was halfway to the cab entrance by that time and didn't hear just what it was.

I promised the taxi man a good tip if he'd get me to the Beauclerc and back in time for my train, and we whirled out of the station into the mess of Vanderbilt Avenue. We did not make very rapid progress, and I leaned out and urged him a little, which may have made him nervous, for when we turned into Forty-third Street and started west, he seemed to drive carelessly. They had been watering the streets, though why they

want to do that dangerous thing I have never understood.

My driver was going with a good deal of impetus when we neared Broadway, and just about the time he got there another taxi slipped out in front of him, and he slapped on the brakes and we started to describe a circle, while I experienced that sickish feeling which is produced only by two things—a skidding car and an incipient earthquake.

We had both, this time, for as we came around we gave the other fellow a side swipe which shriveled up his front mud guard a bit and didn't improve our hind one. I noticed these things as I climbed out. Then, as I didn't seem to be of any particular use there, and as those taxi persons were using very shocking language to each other for a Sunday morning discussion, I stepped over to Broadway and caught a north-bound car, which overtook a blockade two squares farther, making it necessary for me to sprint across to Eighth Avenue, where I made a flying leap and landed on a conductor, who said a lot of very searching things to me about those persons who to save a few minutes risk the lives of themselves and others, especially others. We went ahead, though, at a good lick, and I suddenly noticed, while he was still lecturing me, that we were passing the Beauclerc Hotel, which the gentle reader may remember was my destination.

I didn't wait for him to finish his lecture, nor

for him to stop the car, but made another flying leap, after the manner recommended by the best authorities—that is to say, in the direction the car was going. It was a successful leap but not a very successful landing. We were bisecting a colored picnic party just then, and there was still a considerable portion of it on my side of the car, including the band—some horns, I think, and a bass drum. I am not very clear as to the horns, but recall other details quite clearly. I know the drummer was there, for I upset him as I landed; and then to make matters still more perfect I stepped into his drum. I suppose the drum head was stretched pretty tight, for it made a noise like a retarded backfire when my foot went through. When the drummer got on his feet he began prancing around, using terms of violence, and a crowd was there in less than a minute, including two policemen with a patrol wagon that had the luck to be passing and offered me and the drummer a seat together, and drove us to the station of that precinct, though I carefully explained to those officers that I wouldn't have time to try my case just then, as I had to get back to Elizabeth, who was waiting for her glasses, which articles I was just about to connect with at the Beauclerc Hotel.

For some reason what I said did not impress them. They merely said I could attend to those matters in the morning, which gave me a chill, for it seemed to imply that my present engagement might last overnight. In my mind's eye I saw

Elizabeth waiting my return. I did not imagine her worrying. I did, however, imagine her becoming considerably annoyed, taking the next train home, and having something pertinent to say on my arrival. I could also imagine her, in event of my nonarrival, turning on a general alarm of some sort, something that would be hard to live down. Once on a former occasion I had got mislaid during an entire afternoon, while Elizabeth waited. There was nothing in the memory that encouraged me to wish to repeat the incident.

The fat and rubicund sergeant in charge of the station looked us over cheerfully as we ranged before his desk. The drummer was a spindly, loose-jointed person, astonishingly bow-legged, with quite extraordinary lips and a very deep complexion. He had brought in his damaged drum, encircled it with his bow-legs, which seemed made for the purpose. His chin barely came above the counter—the bar of justice, I mean—so that the sergeant had to bend over and peer down at him, to get the entire picture. On the other hand, I am quite a tall person, and I felt it necessary to stand erect and appear dignified. Possibly the net effect was somewhat engaging, but why our judge should suddenly be seized with convulsive laughter and continue his unseemly mirth, rocking back and forth, with the tears running down his cheeks, I failed to see. To me the situation was not at all amusing and I think it was not so to my partner in misfortune, who went on steadily

reciting his wrongs, though by this time his words were lost in a general hilarity which, when one considers that it was in a court of justice on a Sabbath morning, was in bad taste, to say the least.

Our presiding official finally found his voice and, rapping for order, regarded the complainant.

"What's all this about, anyway?" he demanded. "What's your name, where are you from, and what happened?"

My accuser locked his parenthetic legs a bit more firmly around his drum. "Yes, sah, Mistah Captain," he said, "yas, sah, I'll tell you all about it, sah. My name is Hennery Lucas Jackson, sah, an' I'm bass drummah in de Lenox Ban', an' I play my own drum—I owns it mahse'f, an' I get fo' dollahs foh a Sunday picnic. Yas, sah, I does. An' dis mohnin' de Circle Club done had me engaged to go across de rivah, and dat's wheah we was on de way—goin' down to take de ferry, when dis hyeah long-leg' guy-raft came sailin' en'-wise offen a cyar, and knocked me plum ossified, and stomp his foot thu a bran' new drum head dat cos' me seben dollahs on'y las' week, an'—

The sergeant interrupted him with a renewed explosion of laughter in which once more the spectators joined. Quiet restored, he asked me what I had to say in defense.

I explained, with grave dignity, that I did not wish to make a defense—that my accuser's statement of the case was a miracle of clearness, and

closely adhered to the facts, so far as I knew them. I added that my desire was to reimburse him for his loss, on the spot, and with as much speed as possible, my mishap being due to the exigencies of a missing article, a waiting wife, and a presently departing train.

After all, the sergeant was a good soul. said he really ought to lock us both up, to appear before the justice Monday morning, but he didn't want to break up either a picnic or a family, so that if I would pay Mr. Hennery Lucas Jackson, of the Lenox Band, ten dollars, cash in hand, we might go our ways, and that if Mr. Jackson got four dollars for playing a drum with two heads, the picnic might be willing to allow two dollars, this time, for beating a drum with one head, so he would be without loss. The audience appreciated this Solomon-like decision, to which I promptly subscribed, in the amount named. Then both Mr. Jackson and I shook hands with the sergeant and with each other. After which, being excused, I lost no time in getting back to the Beauclerc Hotel.

Something told me, even as I crossed the threshold, that my errand would be fruitless. The clerk told me the same thing, when I asked him. No glasses had been found in the room specified. The chambermaid, summoned, corroborated this statement. She had renovated the room, even to moving the furniture—nothing in the shape of lost property had been discovered.

I did not argue the matter. I set out, rather deliberately, for the Grand Central Station. There was no longer any hurry. The train would be gone by the time I arrived. Elizabeth had either taken it or she hadn't, and in either case I had nothing pleasant to tell her-nothing that could be set up as a defense when I should be called to a sort of general account. I was returning without her glasses; I was returning with a cash shortage of ten dollars; I was returning with a scratched hand and a bruised knee which I had received in the impact with Hennery Lucas Jackson and his unhappy bass drum. If Elizabeth was still waiting she was in no frame of mind to understand what I had gone through for her sake she would be critical, even dangerous. On the whole, I decided to forget my adventures on the way to the Beauclerc, particularly my contact with Hennery Lucas Jackson.

I did not really expect that Elizabeth would be at the table where I had left her, but when I entered the restaurant, there in the corner by the window she still sat—reading the Sunday paper!—reading them with her own glasses—I recognized their pattern! She looked up as I approached, observing me in her casual way.

"Why," she said, absently, "you seem to have been gone a long time. I'm afraid our train has left, but it doesn't matter—I've been so interested in some articles about the strikes. We can take the next train. Where were you, anyway?"

I sat down, and by a strong effort of will controlled myself.

"Elizabeth," I said, "where did you get those

glasses?"

She seemed to remember, then.

"Oh yes," she said, "my glasses. Why I found them in my handbag, right after you left. You must have given them to me when you came in from the cigar counter. I hope you didn't look for them much. Did you?"

"Oh no," I said, "only in two or three places.

I've been out for a little recreation."

MR. RABBIT'S HOME BREW

A BEDTIME REEL

NCE upon a time Mr. Jack Rabbit did something he was very proud of, so he dressed up and went all around to tell about it. The first ones he met were Mr. Fox and Mr. Coon, who were talking over Mr. Man's spring crop of chickens; and when they saw Mr. Rabbit all dressed up they stopped to hear the news. So Mr. Rabbit told them.

It had all begun, he said, by him starting to make some grape jelly, but when he had just got the juice squeezed out and the sugar put into it, company came in and he had to set it away. Then one thing and another had happened, so he didn't get at it again for two or three days. He was afraid by that time it had spoiled, he said, but when he came to taste it it was better than any grape juice he had ever tasted before. He said it seemed to sparkle on his tongue in a way that made him think it might get still better if he left it longer. So he left it, and kept tasting it every day, until now it was simply the best grape juice that ever was made by anybody. Rabbit said he didn't suppose that anything like it was ever made in the world before, and if Mr. Coon and Mr. Fox would come down to his house

he would let them sample it. He said a very little of it made him feel like a boy, and that he was sure a little more of it would make him outjump and outrun anything in the Big Deep Woods. He had put it up in bottles and he shouldn't wonder if a bottle of it would make a person able to fly.

Mr. Coon and Mr. Fox said they did not care very much for liquid things, as a rule, but from all Mr. Rabbit said, this must be very wonderful and that some time they would drop around. They were just planning an evening hunting trip now, and hoped Mr. Rabbit would excuse them.

So Mr. Rabbit went on and told about his new juice to all the Hollow Tree and Deep Woods people, but they all asked to be excused, until he came to Mr. Turtle, who is always obliging; besides, Great-grandfather Tortoise about twenty-seven generations back beat Mr. Rabbit's ancestor, Mr. Hare, in a footrace, by a trick; and Mr. Turtle has been trying to make it up to Mr. Rabbit ever since.

Mr. Turtle said he had nothing much to do, and would just as soon go home with Mr. Rabbit as not. He mostly preferred water as a steady drink, but very likely Mr. Rabbit's new juice would be even better, though he had never wanted to fly, since once at a very early age he had a chance to try it, when an eagle carried him up about a half a mile and let go of him so he would have a good start. Mr. Turtle said he didn't fly

MR. RABBIT'S HOME BREW

much on that occasion, and thought it better to start from the ground and go up.

So they went along talking to Mr. Rabbit's house, and it was about sundown when they got there, for it was several mileposts and Mr. Turtle doesn't travel very fast. Mr. Rabbit said it would be fine to have supper, with some of his new juice to go with it; so he flew around and got out his best things, and made a nice vegetable soup out of his garden (for Mr. Rabbit has the best garden of anybody), and when it was all ready he went out where Mr. Turtle was sitting on the front stoop, looking at the new moon, and a new comet which some people said was going to strike the Big Deep Woods), and told him to come in.

So Mr. Turtle came in, and they sat down and had the nice soup which was so good that Mr. Turtle said he guessed he'd have some more. Then Mr. Rabbit opened a bottle of the new grape juice, and he sampled that, and said it was good, too—good and different—and he believed he preferred the soup as a steady diet. But Mr. Rabbit said the juice suited him, and that a glass or two of it made him feel that he could run and jump over anything in sight—including the moon or even the comet.

So Mr. Turtle kept eating the soup, and Mr. Rabbit kept drinking the juice, and pretty soon he got up in his chair on his hind feet, and Mr. Turtle thought maybe he was getting ready to

jump over the comet, or to fly or something; but Mr. Rabbit only wanted to lean over the table to explain how Mr. Turtle's twenty-seventh great-grandfather beat Grandpaw Hare in a footrace; and when he had enjoyed another glass or two of the juice he leaned over still farther and explained it again in a different way, and by and by he explained it again in still another way, and after awhile he explained it in all three ways at once to Mr. Turtle, who couldn't tell by what he said whether Grandpaw Hare had been Mr. Rabbit's grandfather, or whether Mr. Rabbit had been his own grandfather and won the race himself, because that was what Mr. Rabbit said just before he slid out of his chair, under the table, and went sound asleep.

That worried Mr. Turtle. He had never seen Mr. Rabbit behave in that way, and he was afraid he was having a spell of some kind, and ought to have something done for him. So he pulled him out and shook him, but Mr. Rabbit only said something about flying a race with the comet and beating it, and then went to sleep again. Then Mr. Turtle remembered that Mr. Fox is very smart, and he decided to find him and see what he could do to bring Mr. Rabbit to. But it would take him so long to find Mr. Fox and bring him back that he concluded to take Mr. Rabbit with him. So he picked him up and started. Mr. Rabbit wasn't able to walk a step or even put his foot on the ground and Mr. Turtle had to carry him.

MR. RABBIT'S HOME BREW

It was a good ways and Mr. Turtle got very tired. When he couldn't carry him another step, he put him down and dragged him fully a mile. Then he got him on his back and carried him and carried him until by and by he came to Mr. Coon and Mr. Fox asleep under a tree, resting after their evening hunt.

By that time Mr. Turtle had had just about all of Mr. Rabbit he could stand. He dropped him right there and set out for home and never looked behind him.

It wasn't till after sunrise that Mr. Rabbit woke up. When he did Mr. Fox and Mr. Coon were watching him and talking about the way he looked. Mr. Rabbit said he might look pretty bad, but that he felt worse. He said he could never look as bad as he felt, not in a thousand years. He said he felt perfectly awful and probably would never feel well again. He said he couldn't see how anyone who had felt as well as he had the night before could feel so poorly the next morning. He hadn't eaten anything, he said, but a little soup—the new grape juice having been all he needed.

Mr. Coon felt of his pulse and said it was funny how it acted, and that something must have got into that new juice which Mr. Rabbit had enjoyed so freely. He said Mr. Rabbit had better throw the rest of it away as soon as he was able. Mr. Rabbit said it was too late to talk about that, as he had used it all up, but that he hoped the comet would hit him if he ever made any more of it.

He said he wished Mr. Coon would tie something cool—a wet sheet or something—around his head; which Mr. Coon did, and by night Mr. Rabbit felt better and was able to eat a little thin soup, but he wouldn't have tasted of any more of that juice for anything. Even the smell of the bottles made him deathly sick, and he had Mr. Coon and Mr. Fox go home with him and carry those bottles all out and break them. Then he felt still better and he improved through the night. And next morning early he began leading a very simple life.

THE END













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